

Understanding China's Footprint in the Pacific Islands' Media Landscape

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Abstract

Over the past decade, the People's Republic of China (PRC) has sought to deepen its ties with the Pacific Islands. Beijing's efforts to cultivate influence in the region have included expanding economic, diplomatic, and security ties with individual Pacific Island nations as well as the PRC's footprint in the region's media landscape and broader information environment. In this report, we examine the efforts of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to shape the media and information environments of 15 Pacific Islands. To place the CCP's efforts into context, we provide an overview of the media environments in these countries and identify key trends currently shaping the dissemination and consumption of information across the region. We then identify the tactics and techniques that Beijing employs to shape the media landscape in each of the countries examined. Finally, we examine the effectiveness of the CCP's efforts.

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This work was performed under US Department of State Cooperative Agreement Award Number SNZ95024CA0046.

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Approved by: 

May 2026

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Executive Summary

Over the past decade, the People's Republic of China (PRC) has sought to deepen its ties with the Pacific Islands. Beijing's efforts to cultivate influence in the region have included expanding economic, diplomatic, and security ties with individual Pacific Island nations, as well as expanding its footprint in the region's media landscape and broader information environment. In this report, we examine the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP's) efforts to shape the media and information environments of 15 Pacific Islands.

How does China seek to influence the media and information environments in the Pacific Islands?

China uses a complex mix of tactics to shape the Pacific Islands' media landscapes and broader information environment, including internet connectivity. These tactics target three levels of the media landscape:

- **State level.** CCP tactics at the state level include signing bilateral media cooperation agreements; making PRC state-run media available to local audiences; and financing, building, and operating a local information and communications (ICT) infrastructure.
- **Organizational level.** CCP tactics at the organizational or media outlet level include content sharing and coproduction between PRC state-run media and local media outlets, attempts by PRC actors to invest in local media outlets, and PRC embassy engagement with the local press.
- **Individual level.** CCP tactics that target individual media practitioners include providing all-expense-paid trips to China and directly pressuring media practitioners to censor their reporting or publish specific content.

What is unique about China's approach?

We were repeatedly asked during our research how China's efforts to engage media in the Pacific Islands are different from what other countries are doing. Based on our research, China's approach to engaging media in the Pacific Islands is distinct in the following ways:

- **Objectives.** Perhaps the greatest difference lies in the objectives of China's efforts. Whereas support from long-standing partners such as Australia and New Zealand is focused on encouraging the development of free and independent media, China's

engagement with Pacific media is primarily aimed at promoting a positive image of China and shaping public discussion in ways that further China's interests. With one of the most restrictive media environments in the world, China is poorly positioned to support the development of free, independent, and professional media.

- **Scope.** Beijing uses a wide variety of strategies, techniques, and actors—including its state-directed media complex and propaganda system—to shape the media landscapes of nearly every Pacific Island we researched. For a sense of scale, we identified activities aimed at engaging media at the state, organizational, and individual levels in at least 8 of the 15 countries that we examined.
- **Lack of transparency.** The way Beijing engages with Pacific Island governments and media lacks transparency. Details about bilateral media cooperation agreements are consistently unavailable. Unlike the region's long-standing partners such as Australia, New Zealand, the United States, and Japan, China does not make details about funding public, so it is unclear how much money Beijing is funneling into the region's media and information landscapes.

Given that the objective of China's assistance is to shape public discussion rather than support the development of independent and professional media, accepting such support carries the risk of eroding Pacific Island media practitioners' autonomy and missing opportunities to develop more lasting solutions to the challenges they face.

How successful has China been?

Our research suggests that the CCP has had some success shaping local media discussion in the Pacific Islands, but this success has been relatively limited and uneven. These mixed results are likely due to a combination of factors that present China with both challenges and opportunities for pursuing its objectives in the media landscape.

"China has pockets of influence, but it is not widespread at all."

—Barbara Dreaver, Pacific correspondent, TVNZ

Factors that limit China's impact on local media landscapes include the following:

- **Limited resonance of state-run media.** Chinese state-run media have not yet established a strong reach in the region and do not compete with established sources of news such as the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), Radio New Zealand (RNZ), or Television New Zealand (TVNZ).
- **Suspicion of China.** Experts and media practitioners mentioned a variety of suspicions about China, including concerns that China seeks to export authoritarianism, exploit local economies, and capture political elites, and that it is anti-Christian.

- ***Strength of journalistic norms.*** Multiple Pacific journalists voiced their commitment to maintaining independence and journalistic integrity. Local media practitioners and experts described journalists in the region as “courageous,” “proud,” and unlikely to be susceptible to undue influence.
- ***Lack of interest in China.*** China’s efforts tend to focus on promoting stories about China. Our research suggests that local audiences are more interested in things that are happening closer to home and may not have a large appetite for China-centric news.
- ***Continued engagement of long-standing partners.*** Media development programs such as those led by ABC and TVNZ and new and innovative business models such as Pasifika TV continue to figure prominently in the regional media landscape and bolster the region’s independent press.

Despite these constraints, there are multiple ***factors that have the potential to work in China’s favor and bear close monitoring going forward.*** These include the following:

- ***Financial state of regional media.*** Local experts and media practitioners described the financial state of the region’s media as the worst in history. The dire straits of the region’s media outlets may make them more receptive to China’s offers of funds.
- ***Staffing challenges.*** Many subject matter experts cited high attrition rates in Pacific newsrooms, low salaries in the media sector, and inexperience among Pacific journalists as key challenges to Pacific media outlets’ resilience and survival.
- ***Frustration with long-standing partners.*** Some Pacific media practitioners expressed frustration with the types of support that they receive from long-standing partners such as Australia, New Zealand, the United States, and the United Kingdom, and the time it takes those partners to respond to requested adjustments. They also expressed concern about the United States’ review of its foreign assistance programs and the impact that changes could have on the support that Pacific media receive.
- ***The decisions of Pacific Island governments.*** Perhaps the most significant factor is the decisions made by Pacific Island leaders. Several local experts and media practitioners suggested that China has had the greatest success shaping media discussion in countries where it has managed to cultivate close ties with the political elite, such as Solomon Islands, Nauru, and Kiribati.

Given the speed with which the region’s media landscape is evolving and the scope of the CCP’s efforts, China’s footprint could expand quickly, depending on how these factors play out over the near term. Although Beijing may be limited to “pockets of influence” now, its influence is likely to grow.

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1. Introduction

Over the last decade, the People’s Republic of China (PRC) has sought to deepen its ties with the Pacific Island countries and territories (henceforth referred to as the “Pacific Islands”). Beijing’s efforts to cultivate influence in the region have included expanding economic, diplomatic, and security ties with individual Pacific Island nations, as well as expanding its footprint in the region’s media landscape and broader information environment. In this report, we examine the Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP’s) efforts to shape the media and information environments of 15 Pacific Islands:

- Cook Islands
- Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)
- Fiji
- French Polynesia
- Kiribati
- Marshall Islands (RMI)
- New Caledonia
- Niue
- Palau
- Papua New Guinea (PNG)
- Samoa
- Solomon Islands
- Tonga
- Vanuatu
- Wallis and Futuna

To place the CCP’s efforts to shape the media landscape of the Pacific Islands in context, we provide an overview of the media and information environment in these countries and identify key trends currently shaping the dissemination and consumption of information across the region. We then identify the tactics and

Key research questions

- What are the key trends shaping the media landscape in the Pacific Islands? What do we need to know to put China’s activities in context?
- How is the CCP seeking to influence the media landscape in the region?
- What is unique about the CCP’s efforts?
- How can observers assess the CCP’s success?

techniques that Beijing employs to shape the media landscape—including regional and local media outlets, journalists, and the information and communications (ICT) infrastructure—in each of the countries examined. Finally, we examine whether the CCP’s efforts have improved the reach and resonance of its narratives with audiences in the region.

This report builds on past CNA research on the Indo-Pacific media landscape and China's propaganda and influence efforts.¹ Its findings are based on searches of publicly available information, including but not limited to local, regional, and international news media reporting, academic and think tank reports, PRC embassy websites and social media accounts, and PRC state-run media reporting in both English and Chinese. In addition, we held structured conversations—both virtually and in person—with subject matter experts and local media practitioners from throughout the region. We also held two public events—one in Suva, Fiji, in partnership with the University of the South Pacific (USP)² and the other in Wellington, New Zealand, at the Centre for Strategic Studies with Victoria University of Wellington³—to elicit further input and feedback on our findings. Our research was completed in January 2026.

The remainder of this report is organized into the following sections:

- Section 2 provides a brief overview of the Pacific Islands media landscape and discusses key trends currently shaping the dissemination and consumption of information across the region.
- Section 3 examines the tactics that the CCP uses to engage with local media outlets in the region and shape media narratives.
- Section 4 contains a snapshot of the impact of China's engagement on the content produced by selected local media outlets in the region.
- Section 5 offers some conclusions regarding China's footprint in the regional media landscape and offers implications for the region.

2. What are the key trends shaping the media and information landscapes of the Pacific Islands?

To understand CCP efforts to influence media in the Pacific Islands, we must first understand the key factors and trends that shape the Pacific Islands' media and information landscapes. In this section, we provide a brief overview of the state of the media and information environments of the 15 Pacific Island countries selected for this study and discuss key trends currently shaping the dissemination and consumption of information across the region.

2.1 Overview: A diverse media landscape

The information environment in the Pacific Islands is extraordinarily diverse. Pacific Islands' populations are dispersed across thousands of islands spread out over millions of square miles of ocean. This remote and disparate geography results in highly varied levels of connectivity to the internet. For instance, internet penetration—defined as the percentage of the population with access to the internet via any device—varies from 32 percent in Papua New Guinea to 85.2 percent in Fiji. Similarly, mobile phone subscriptions vary from 19 per 100 people in the FSM to 133 subscriptions per 100 people in Palau. The more than 8 million inhabitants of the region are culturally and linguistically diverse, boasting 22 official languages and more than 1,200 unofficial languages and dialects (see Table 1). Overviews of the media landscapes of each of the 15 countries examined are contained in Appendix A.

Table 1. Characteristics of the information environments of the Pacific Islands

Country	Population	Literacy	Internet Penetration	Mobile Phone Subscriptions (per 100 people)	Official Languages
Cook Islands	16,800 ⁴	95% ⁵	64.80% ⁶	100 ⁷	English, Cook Islands Maori ⁸
FSM	99,603 ⁹	95.10% ¹⁰	40.40% ¹¹	19 ¹²	English ¹³
Fiji	951,611 ¹⁴	99.10% ¹⁵	85.20% ¹⁶	107 ¹⁷	English, iTaukei (Fijian), Fiji Hindi ¹⁸
French Polynesia	303,540 ¹⁹	Unavailable	72.70% ²⁰	107 ²¹	French ²²

Country	Population	Literacy	Internet Penetration	Mobile Phone Subscriptions (per 100 people)	Official Languages
Wallis and Futuna	15,929 ²³	Unavailable	45.80% ²⁴	Unknown	French ²⁵
Kiribati	116,545 ²⁶	Unavailable	54% ²⁷	49 ²⁸	I-Kiribati and English ²⁹
New Caledonia	304,167 ³⁰	96.60% ³¹	82% ³²	90 ³³	French ³⁴
Niue	2,000 ³⁵	99% ³⁶	90% ³⁷	83.5 ³⁸	Niuean, English ³⁹
Palau	21,864 ⁴⁰	96.60% ⁴¹	67% ⁴²	133 ⁴³	Palauan, English, Sonsoralese, Tobian, Angaur, and Japanese ⁴⁴
Papua New Guinea	10,046,233 ⁴⁵	70% ⁴⁶	32% ⁴⁷	48 ⁴⁸	Tok Pisin, English, Hiri Motu ⁴⁹
Marshall Islands (RMI)	82,011 ⁵⁰	93.8% ⁵¹	66% ⁵²	38 ⁵³	Marshallese ⁵⁴
Samoa	208,853 ⁵⁵	99.10% ⁵⁶	78% ⁵⁷	60 ⁵⁸	Samoan (Polynesian), English ⁵⁹
Solomon Islands	726,799 ⁶⁰	84.10% ⁶¹	36% ⁶²	67 ⁶³	Melanesian Pijin, English ⁶⁴
Tonga	104,889 ⁶⁵	99.40% ⁶⁶	67% ⁶⁷	61 ⁶⁸	Tongan, English ⁶⁹
Vanuatu	318,007 ⁷⁰	89.10% ⁷¹	66% ⁷²	78 ⁷³	Bislama, English, French ⁷⁴

Source: CNA.

2.2 Media ownership in the Pacific Islands

As part of our effort to map the media landscape of the region, CNA gathered information on 129 media outlets operating in the Pacific Islands, including details about their ownership. (See appendix A for information on key media outlets organized by country.) We found that the ownership structures of local media outlets fell into four general categories:

- State-owned
- Commercial or privately owned by Pacific Island based entities
- Mixed ownership that included both state and private commercial shareholders in the Pacific Islands
- Owned by local or international church-affiliated entities.

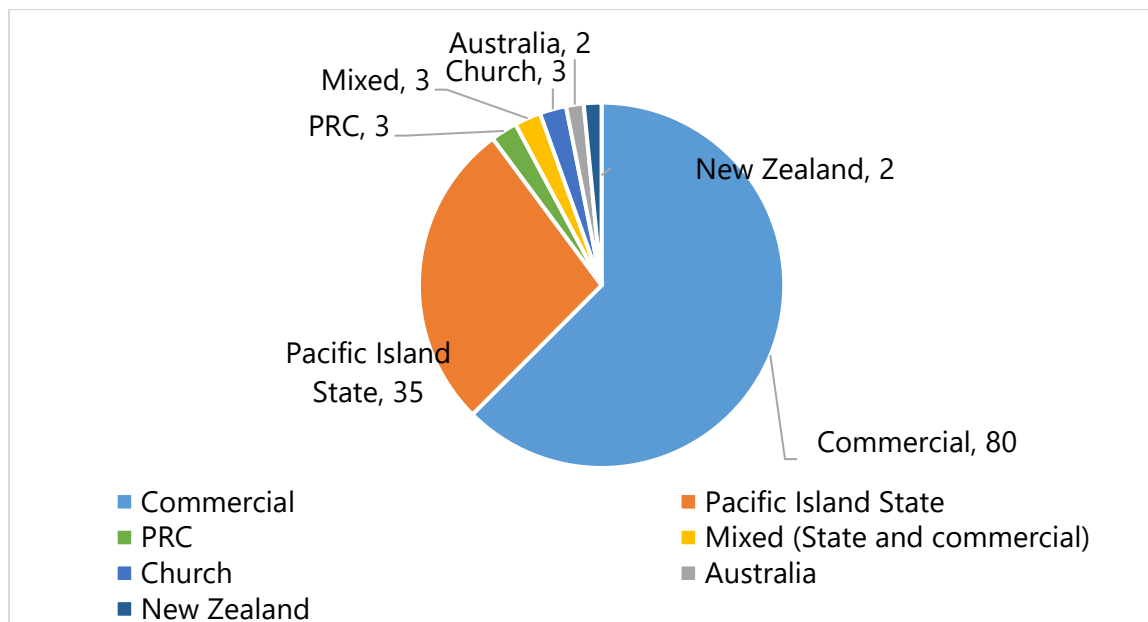
Figure 1 shows the breakdown of the 129 media outlets by ownership structure.

The majority of media outlets in the region are locally owned commercial enterprises. These enterprises comprised 80 (63 percent) of the 129 media outlets in our dataset. The bulk of these media outlets are small enterprises, often owned by an individual or a family. However, a handful of outlets are connected to large conglomerates.⁷⁵

In addition to these local media outlets, we found that state-run media outlets—including those belonging to Australia and New Zealand as well as individual Pacific Islands—remain a key presence in the regional media landscape, comprising a third of the media outlets in our dataset.

Rounding out the media landscape were three media outlets whose ownership structure included both government and private entities.⁷⁶ Finally, there were three church-affiliated media outlets: Doulos Broadcasting in Tonga (affiliated with the American Christian satellite network Trinity Broadcasting Network); TV4-Upu Mana (affiliated with Catholic Media Samoa); and TV5 Star TV (affiliated with the Uniting Christian Church of Samoa).

Figure 1. Media outlets in the Pacific Islands by type of ownership



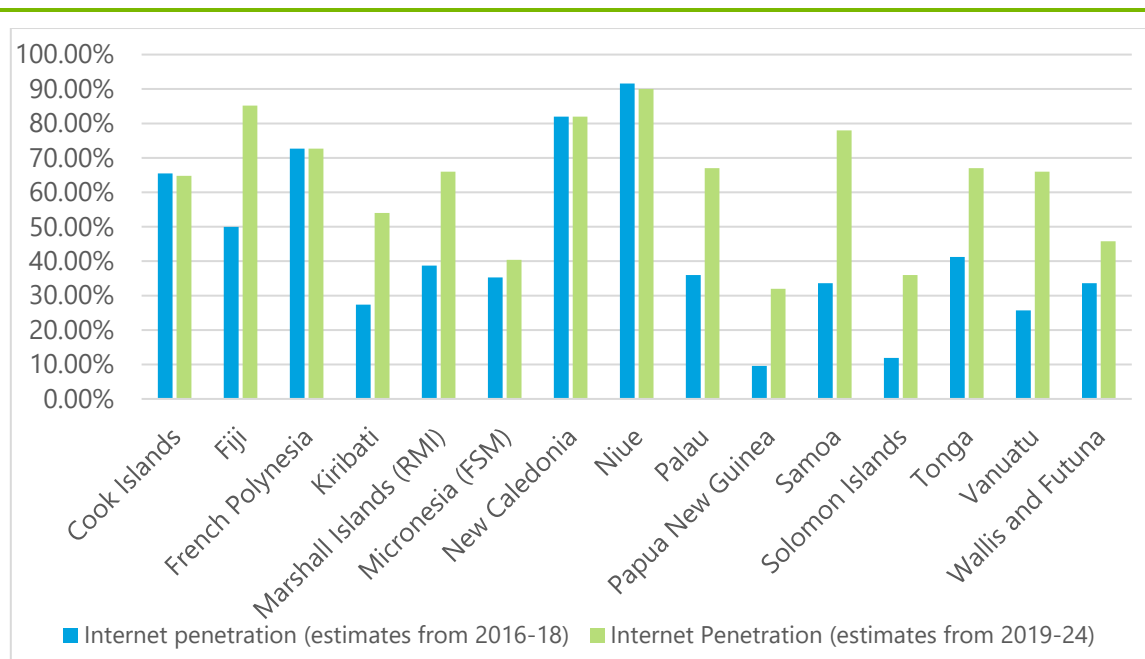
Source: CNA.

2.3 Key trends shaping the regional media landscape

Increasing connectivity across the region

One of the most striking trends currently shaping the media landscape across the Pacific Islands is the rapid increase in connectivity to the internet. Within the last decade, internet penetration increased significantly in 11 of the 15 Pacific Islands studied in this report (see Figure 2). This increase in internet connectivity has predominantly been driven by the rapid expansion of the subsea cable network connecting the Pacific Islands to the rest of the world. Of the 22 submarine cable systems currently in operation in the Pacific Islands, 10 have entered operation since 2019 (see Table 2), and several cable projects either are being planned or are under construction as of early 2026.⁷⁷ In addition, according to local media practitioners and experts from several countries—including the Cook Islands, Tonga, and Fiji—Starlink has become increasingly available in their countries and has improved the quality and speed of internet connections while lowering costs.⁷⁸ See page 24 for more on Starlink and Chinese competitors.

Figure 2. Penetration rates of the internet in the Pacific Islands, 2016–18 versus 2019–24



Source: CNA, with data from CIA *World Factbook* and International Telecommunication Union.

Table 2. Subsea cables in the Pacific Islands that have entered service since 2019

Cable Name	Countries Served	Year of Operation
Chuuk-Pohnpei Cable	Federated States of Micronesia	2019
Coral Sea Cable System	Papua New Guinea; Solomon Islands	2020
Gondwana-2/Picot-2	Fiji; New Caledonia	2022
Kumul Domestic Submarine Cable System	Papua New Guinea	2019
Manatua	Cook Islands; French Polynesia; Niue; Samoa	2020
Natitua Sud	French Polynesia	2023
Southern Cross NEXT	Fiji; Kiribati	2022
Tautira-Teahupo’o	French Polynesia	2023
Echo	Palau	2025
East Micronesia Cable System	Kiribati; FSM; Nauru	2025

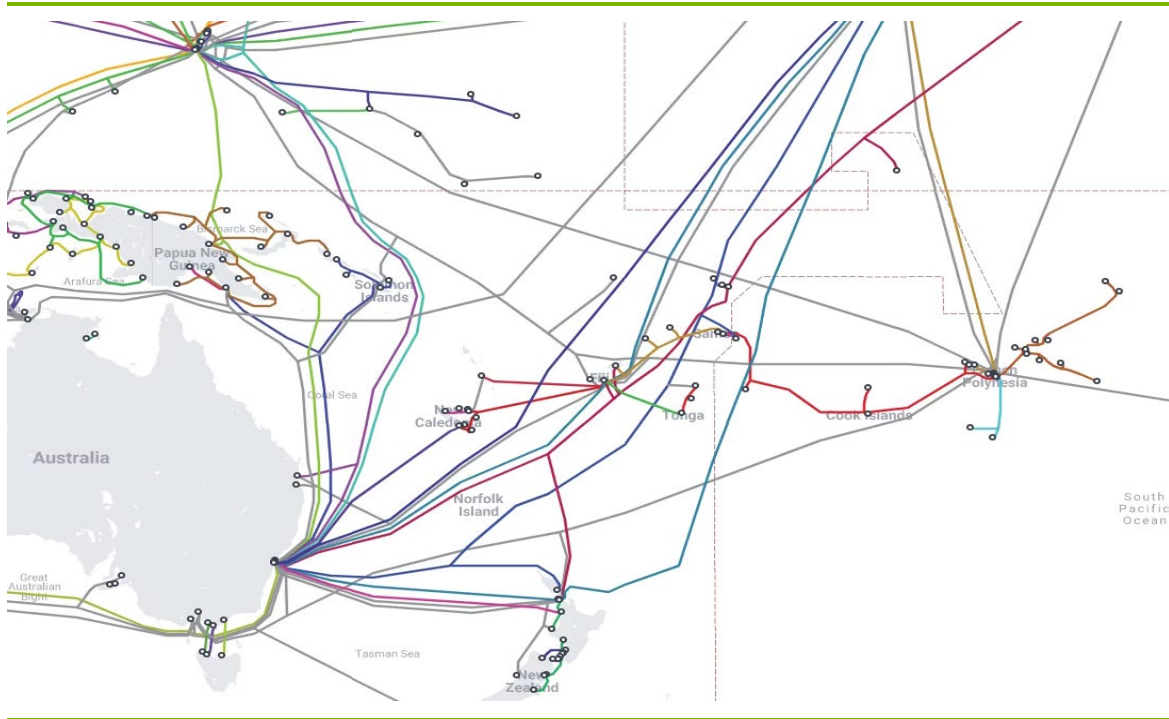
Source: Submarine Cable Map, TeleGeography, <https://www.submarinecablemap.com/>.

Despite the rapid and ongoing expansion of the subsea cable system linking the Pacific Islands, connectivity remains fragile and vulnerable to disruption. Subsea internet cables can be broken, damaged, or cut and are difficult to repair. In Tonga in 2022, for example, the subsea cables connecting the country to the rest of the world were severed by the eruption of the Huna Tonga-Hunga Ha’apai underwater volcano and subsequent tsunami. It took over a month to repair the cable connecting Tonga’s main island to Fiji and longer to repair the domestic cables providing internet connection to outlying island groups.⁷⁹ Similarly, the December 2024 earthquake off the coast of Vanuatu caused a fire at the landing station for the island’s sole submarine cable, ICN1, which temporarily interrupted the power supply and disabled internet traffic. It took 10 days and a multilateral effort to restore the connection.⁸⁰

Digital transition reshaping the media landscape

The rapid increase in connectivity across the region has led to lower data costs, making it possible for local populations to turn to digital and social media as their main sources of news and information. This has significantly reshaped the media landscape in the region. Several local experts and media practitioners told CNA that Facebook has become the most popular social media platform and is often the primary source of news and information for many Pacific Islanders.⁸¹ To meet this change in how their audiences consume information, many media outlets in the region now maintain an active presence on Facebook and, in the case of broadcast media, YouTube. Indeed, some local media outlets have only a Facebook page or a YouTube channel as their sole online presence.

Figure 3. Submarine cables connecting the Pacific Islands



Source: TeleGeography, last updated Dec. 9, 2025, <https://www.submarinecablemap.com/>.

Note: Each color represents a different cable system.

Following in the cultural tradition of passing information via word of mouth, local Facebook groups have become an important tool for Pacific Islanders to share news and information. Within these closed groups, Pacific Islanders share local news and engage in lively discussions. An unfortunate drawback of these groups is that they can be susceptible to the spread of false or misleading information (see section 2.3.3).⁸²

Amid this digital transition, traditional media outlets—especially print newspapers—have faced a series of existential challenges that have led many to cease operations. Key challenges include dwindling sales and advertising revenues, struggles to monetize online content, complications in buying and servicing printing equipment, and difficulties with training and retaining staff.

Dwindling sales and advertising revenue

The media practitioners with whom we spoke universally discussed the financial struggles faced by local media amid the digital transition. Media practitioners and subject matter experts from the Cook Islands, Solomon Islands, and Samoa, for instance, all noted that hard copy newspaper sales have been on the decline in recent years.⁸³ A journalist from the Cook Islands

asserted that his outlet had lost over 1,000 hard-copy sales per day in recent years.⁸⁴ The 2025 *State of the Media: Pacific* report published by the University of Adelaide and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation similarly found that the availability of print media is on a steady decline across the Pacific Islands.⁸⁵ According to the report, FSM, RMI, and Vanuatu each only have one print newspaper in operation, while Tuvalu had none as of early 2025.⁸⁶

Another factor complicating the ability of print newspapers to generate revenue is the disappearance of advertising revenue. According to the 2025 *State of the Media: Pacific* report, much of the advertising that print outlets in the region had relied on for revenue dried up during the COVID-19 pandemic, creating an “existential crisis”

“Pacific media is more vulnerable than at any time in its history due to the lasting impacts of digital disruption and COVID-19. And if that’s not enough, we face an onslaught of AI-driven disinformation, fake news, and deepfakes.”

–Dr. Shailendra Singh, associate professor and head of journalism at USP

for many outlets.⁸⁷ This was corroborated through CNA’s discussions with media practitioners. One journalist asserted that many businesses that had traditionally placed advertisements in print newspapers and, to a lesser extent, on radio broadcasts in Solomon Islands had switched to buying ads on Facebook. Journalists and subject matter experts from the Cook Islands, Fiji, and Palau also cited the decline in advertising post-COVID as a key challenge for print media outlets.⁸⁸

Difficulty monetizing online content

Newspapers that have sought to adapt by establishing a presence online have faced challenges monetizing their new digital content. One journalist stated that he has had mixed success with implementing a paywall on his newspaper’s website, noting that many people are able to evade the paywall and access content for free.⁸⁹ A Samoan diplomat told CNA that many people do not agree with having to pay for an online news subscription, leading her to question how effective paywalls are in generating revenue for newspapers.⁹⁰

Challenges in buying and servicing printing equipment

Media practitioners from the region also pointed to difficulties purchasing and maintaining printing equipment as another key challenge facing traditional newspaper outlets. A Cook Islands media practitioner told CNA that during the COVID-19 pandemic he was unable to get one of his printers serviced by foreign engineers because of travel restrictions and is now unable to afford the cost of repairs.⁹¹ Journalists and subject matter experts from Solomon Islands and Samoa also noted that many outlets can no longer afford the cost of equipment and material required for printing newspapers, prompting some to shut down and others to transition to exclusively digital publication.⁹²

Staffing challenges

Pacific Islands media practitioners consistently lamented high attrition rates among local journalists due to low pay, with some identifying this as the most serious problem facing Pacific media. An expert in Fiji stated that, after working in journalism for a few years, reporters will leave for “greener pastures” in industries that pay three to four times what media outlets can offer, resulting in a “continuous cycle of losing your best staff.”⁹³ A Solomon Islands reporter noted that the government had recruited many of the country’s top journalists to serve in communications roles throughout government ministries, leaving many newsrooms with young and inexperienced journalists, which impacted the depth of coverage.⁹⁴ According to a media practitioner in the Cook Islands, many of the reporters he had trained during his career are now working for overseas outlets such as Radio New Zealand (RNZ) and Television New Zealand (TVNZ), which offer better pay than local media outlets.⁹⁵ This attrition traps newsrooms in a continuous cycle of loss and rebuilding.

Experts and local media practitioners also pointed to limited training and educational opportunities as a challenge. A Samoan diplomat remarked that many reporters in Samoa have not formally studied journalism and have “fallen into” the profession, resulting in a low quality of journalism. The same diplomat also noted that there is a corresponding dearth of training in investigative journalism in Samoa, with many reporters “waiting for stories to fall into [their] laps.”⁹⁶ A media expert in Fiji offered the observation that much of the training that *is* offered to journalists is unevenly distributed and will often go to more seasoned reporters, leaving the younger generation with fewer opportunities to develop their skillsets.⁹⁷

The combination of high attrition rates and limited training opportunities has resulted in a cohort of journalists that are less experienced and less qualified than their counterparts in other regions around the world.⁹⁸

Online spread of false and inaccurate information

As has been the case around the globe, the transition to digital media has been accompanied by the spread of false or inaccurate information. This trend is particularly pronounced in larger Pacific Islands, which often have large diaspora communities living abroad and a greater exposure to foreign social media platforms.⁹⁹

In some recent instances, false news stories spread through social media have inspired panic and caused real damage. For example, in late October and early November 2024, rumors spread through Solomon Islands via social media that children in the capital Honiara were being kidnapped and their organs harvested for sale in Australia. Although unsubstantiated, these stories resonated among Solomon Islanders due to legitimate concerns about public safety in Honiara and a lack of trust in police officers. Some communities went so far as to close

schools and erect roadblocks to prevent outsiders from entering. In at least two instances, foreigners were attacked by people who suspected them of involvement in the kidnappings.¹⁰⁰

Similarly, the online spread of false and misleading information about vaccines has increased hesitancy to get vaccinated in multiple Pacific Island nations.¹⁰¹ According to a Palau journalist, in early 2021, nearly half of Palau's population was hesitant to get vaccinated against COVID-19 due to online misinformation that "ranged from rumors that people in Palau are being used as guinea pigs for experimental drugs to drastic claims of side effects, even to sheer conspiracy theories of the vaccine being used as a mode to implant trackers in people."¹⁰² Similarly, in Samoa, the spread of false information online regarding the measles vaccine and resulting vaccination refusals led to an outbreak of the disease in 2019, resulting in more than 80 deaths.¹⁰³

Long-standing partners remain a key presence in the media landscape

The region's long-standing partners—New Zealand, Australia, France, the United Kingdom, Japan, and the US—remain a key presence in the Pacific Islands' media landscape. In particular, the state-run ABC and RNZ are available across many of the Pacific Islands (see Figure 4).

Multiple experts and local media practitioners told CNA that ABC and RNZ are the most significant and trusted international media outlets in the Pacific Islands' media

environment.¹⁰⁵ In addition to broadcasting their own content, ABC and RNZ also provide training and assistance to Pacific media practitioners.¹⁰⁶ One of the most prominent media development programs in the region is the Pacific Media Assistance Scheme (PACMAS), which is funded by Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and managed by ABC International Development, the media development unit of ABC International.¹⁰⁷ TVNZ and the New Zealand government-funded Pacific Cooperation Broadcasting Limited also facilitate training programs for Pacific media journalists and broadcasters.¹⁰⁸

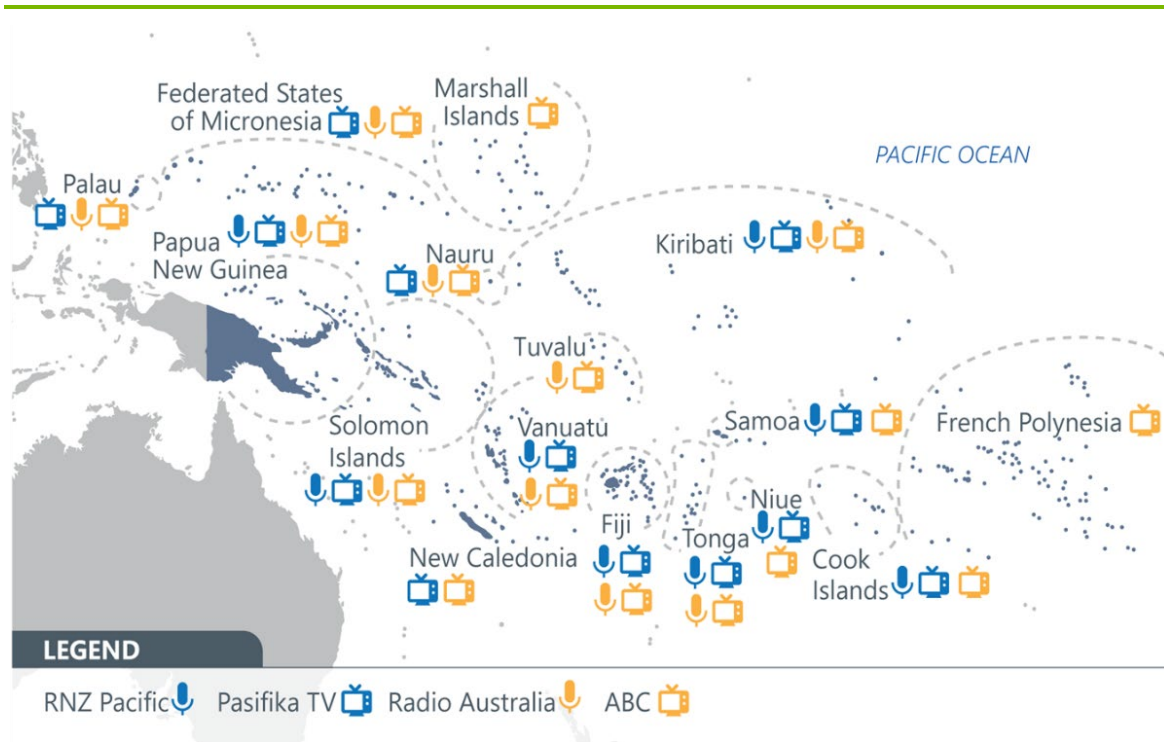
Additionally, French state-run media has a significant presence in France's current and former Pacific territories, including the Francophone parts of Vanuatu as well as New Caledonia, French Polynesia, and Wallis and Futuna.¹⁰⁹ The BBC's Media Action charity has also worked

Frustration with long-standing partners

During the CNA-USP event in Suva, panelists and audience members noted their dissatisfaction with long-standing partners' support for media in Fiji. For instance, Stanley Simpson, the director of Mai TV, asserted that the Australian government was "not consulting" Fijian media regarding the types of trainings it offered to local journalists. In contrast, he asserted that China is "listening to us much better" and stated, "Don't blame China if you're not doing enough."¹⁰⁴

with media outlets and organizations across multiple Pacific Island countries to support public interest media and build resilience against false and misleading information.¹¹⁰

Figure 4. Presence of Australian and New Zealand state-owned media in the Pacific Islands



Source: “Ways to Watch,” ABC, <https://www.abc.net.au/pacific/ways-to-watch>; “Ways to Listen,” ABC Australia, <https://www.abc.net.au/pacific/ways-to-listen>; Pasifika TV, <https://pasifikatv.co.nz/>; “How to Listen,” <https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/listen>.

Note: Dotted lines are intended to delineate island groups and do not represent maritime boundaries; Nauru was not one of the 15 countries selected for this study but was included in the map, given the presence of a Xinhua bureau there.

In addition to direct involvement in the media, long-standing regional powers have also funded the expansion of internet infrastructure in the region. The Australian, New Zealand, US, Japanese, and French governments have provided funding for multiple subsea cable projects in the Pacific Islands, including the East Micronesia Cable System, the SMART TAMTAM cable, and the Tonga Hawaiki Branch System.¹¹¹ Of note, in 2022, the Australian government partially funded the purchase of Digicel Pacific, one of the region’s largest telecommunications providers, by the Australian company Telstra amid concerns that a Chinese company was seeking to purchase Digicel Pacific.¹¹² In 2023, the US and Japanese governments stepped in to provide additional financial assistance to the transaction.¹¹³

“Geopolitics is larger than life in the Pacific region—but the media element is often overlooked. Yet the media are central in this contest as they have reach and influence. Media are trusted. And media can shape public opinion. Media are the last bastion. If the media are captured—especially by foreign interests—then the last line of defense is gone, and democracy is considerably weakened.”

–Dr. Shailendra Singh, associate professor and head of journalism at USP

China is expanding its influence, including in the media landscape

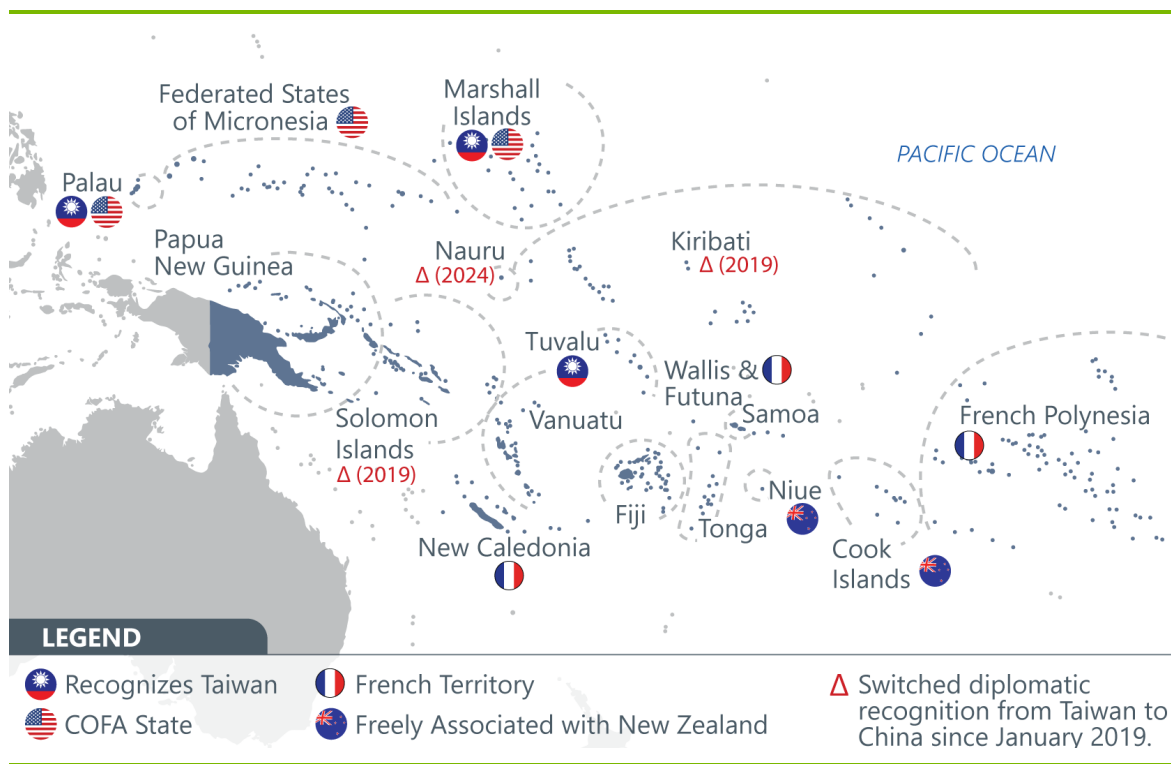
China has multiple strategic interests in the Pacific Islands. By expanding its presence and influence in the region, China can enhance its ability to project power beyond the first and second island chains and deny strategic space to its competitors.¹¹⁴ The Pacific Islands also present China with ample economic opportunities. Pacific Island nations possess significant reserves of valuable natural resources, including critical minerals, fish stocks, and timber.¹¹⁵ Furthermore, the Pacific Islands, which are home to 3 of the 11

countries that maintain official ties with Taiwan, represent an important arena for China to achieve its goal of isolating Taiwan diplomatically (see Figure 5). Through continuous diplomatic efforts China has, in recent years, already halved the number of Pacific Islands with official relationships with Taiwan: Solomon Islands and Kiribati switched their official recognition to China in 2019, and Nauru switched to China in 2024.¹¹⁶

Competing with China versus supporting the Pacific Islands

China’s growing interest in the region has attracted concern from long-standing partners and prompted the development of new strategies that place the Indo-Pacific at the core of geopolitical competition. This has led to concern within Pacific Islands that attention from long-standing partners is focused on competing with China and not on Pacific Islands’ intrinsic needs.

Figure 5. Pacific Islands’ diplomatic relations with the United States, France, New Zealand, China, and Taiwan



Source: CNA.
 Note: COFA = Compact of Free Association.

China’s influence in the Pacific Islands has grown significantly over the past decade.¹¹⁷ In 2018 China secured the membership of all eligible Pacific Islands in the Belt and Road Initiative, and it has established various forms of diplomatic partnerships with multiple Pacific Islands, including Papua New Guinea, Samoa, and Solomon Islands.¹¹⁸ China’s state-owned enterprises (SOEs) are also playing a larger role in Pacific Island infrastructure projects, and the Chinese government has increased security ties with Pacific Island nations, most notably Solomon Islands.¹¹⁹ These economic and diplomatic efforts are accompanied by efforts to shape the local media landscape to promote narratives that further China’s interests and suppress narratives that Beijing finds threatening. China’s efforts to influence the regional media landscape are discussed in detail in section 3 of this report.

Backlash to China's Expanding Presence

China's expanding presence in the Pacific Islands has not been welcomed by everyone who lives there. Some examples of pushback are as follows:

- In 2021, protests in Solomon Islands' capital of Honiara turned violent as protesters from Malaita province clashed with police and burned buildings. The leadership of Malaita publicly opposed Solomon Islands' 2019 switch of diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to China, and the province continued to receive aid from Taiwan even after the switch occurred. According to one opposition politician in Solomon Islands, the protests were a response to Beijing's increasing influence in the country.¹²⁰
- In 2024, Tongan social media users responded with criticism after Tonga's prime minister stated that he saw no problem with accepting China's offer to provide police for the Pacific Leaders Forum in Nuku'alofa.¹²¹
- The US\$119 million in loans that Tonga owes China has also sparked concerns across the country.¹²² Tongan politicians and residents have expressed concerns that repaying these loans will strain the Tongan government's finances, and there is a perception among some Tongans that the loans primarily went to funding China-run projects as opposed to supporting Tonga's own economy.¹²³
- In 2024, riots in Port Moresby resulted in damage to several Chinese-owned businesses and injury to Chinese nationals. In response, the Chinese Embassy lodged a complaint with the Papua New Guinea government.¹²⁴
- In 2025, Cook Islanders protested against closer cooperation with China following the announcement of a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between Beijing and Avarua. Protesters cited concerns that growing ties with China could jeopardize the Cook Islands' relationship with New Zealand.¹²⁵

According to local experts and media practitioners interviewed by CNA, some Pacific Islanders, many of whom are devout Christians, distrust China as a Communist, atheist state.¹²⁶ In some Pacific Islands, there have also been ethnic tensions between Chinese immigrants and local people.¹²⁷

3. How is China seeking to influence the Pacific Islands' media landscape?

As discussed above, China's efforts to expand its presence and influence in the region take place within the context of the Pacific Islands' diverse and evolving media landscapes. In this section, we discuss the different tactics that China uses to engage with local media outlets in the region and shape media narratives.

3.1 Background: The CCP's global campaign to shape the media landscape

The use of propaganda to shape perceptions inside and outside of China has been a core element of how the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) operates throughout its history. For over a century, the CCP has employed tactics such as generating its own print and broadcast media and grooming foreign journalists and opinion leaders to promote its agenda to foreign audiences as "friends of China." Perhaps the most famous of these is the famed American journalist Edgar Snow, who was the first Western journalist given access to key CCP leaders, including Mao Zedong, and is known for his sympathetic portrayals of the party's struggles.

In the early 2000s, China's external propaganda efforts developed into a global campaign to shape the media landscape in its favor, including in the Pacific Islands.¹²⁸ In 2001, two key events formally marked China's status as an emerging economic powerhouse: China joined the World Trade Organization, and Beijing was selected to host the 2008 Summer Olympics. Despite these very public successes, Beijing was concerned that its international image continued to suffer from a perceived anti-China bias in Western media and that this hampered its efforts to develop international influence. In 2004, the party issued a series of directives designed to improve China's foreign-directed media and re-established the External Propaganda Work Leading Small Group, marking the Chinese Communist Party leadership's commitment to the cause.¹²⁹

In 2008, Beijing was confronted with its continued failure to "win hearts and minds" overseas when protests against China's human rights violations—including its actions in Tibet and its suppression of free expression—erupted along the path of the Olympic torch relay in major cities including London and Paris. This public relations debacle reinforced Beijing's belief that it needed to improve China's external propaganda. Less than a year later, China embarked on

an estimated \$6.6 billion campaign to expand its global media presence and improve its international news coverage.¹³⁰

Beijing's efforts to shape foreign perceptions include a complex mix of overt and covert tactics. Wielding its massive state-run media complex, Beijing openly seeks to promote a positive image of China to audiences around the world—"to tell China's stories well," as Xi Jinping describes it—and to discredit, undermine, and delegitimize its critics.¹³¹ Beijing's agents also employ a range of more covert tactics that include intimidating journalists. Within China, Beijing threatens foreign journalists with "an invitation to tea"—a common practice of summoning individuals and threatening them with criminal prosecution for violating China's national security or counterespionage laws if they publish information contrary to Beijing's interests.¹³²

The specific combination of covert and overt tactics that Beijing employs vary depending on the nature of the target media environment. However, Beijing's efforts routinely touch virtually all aspects of the information environments of target countries, including print, digital, and broadcast media, and even ICT infrastructure. In the Mekong region, for instance, China has actively sought to establish a footprint that includes content sharing agreements with local media outlets in all five countries (Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Myanmar), financial investment in local media outlets in several countries, and investment in the development of telecommunications infrastructure by Chinese companies.¹³³ In the following sections, we discuss the tactics that we observed Beijing using to shape media narratives specific to the Pacific Islands.

Comparing China to long-standing partners

Although participants in the CNA events in Suva and Wellington were likely aware of media repression in China—which ranks 178 out of 180 countries in the World Press Freedom Index—several readily compared China to partners with much freer media environments. Some panelists and attendees openly questioned whether China's presence in the region's media landscape is any different from that of long-standing partners such as the US, Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and France. For instance, during the event in Wellington, one participant likened Chinese propaganda to Voice of America and noted that the US also sponsors journalist training trips.¹³⁴

Of note, during a separate conversation, one Solomon Islands subject matter expert told CNA that, although China-funded development projects in Solomon Islands have resulted in improving attitudes toward China, Beijing "does not have much to offer" the Pacific Islands' media industry. As evidence, he pointed to China's lack of "any respect" for an independent press and its control over information.¹³⁵

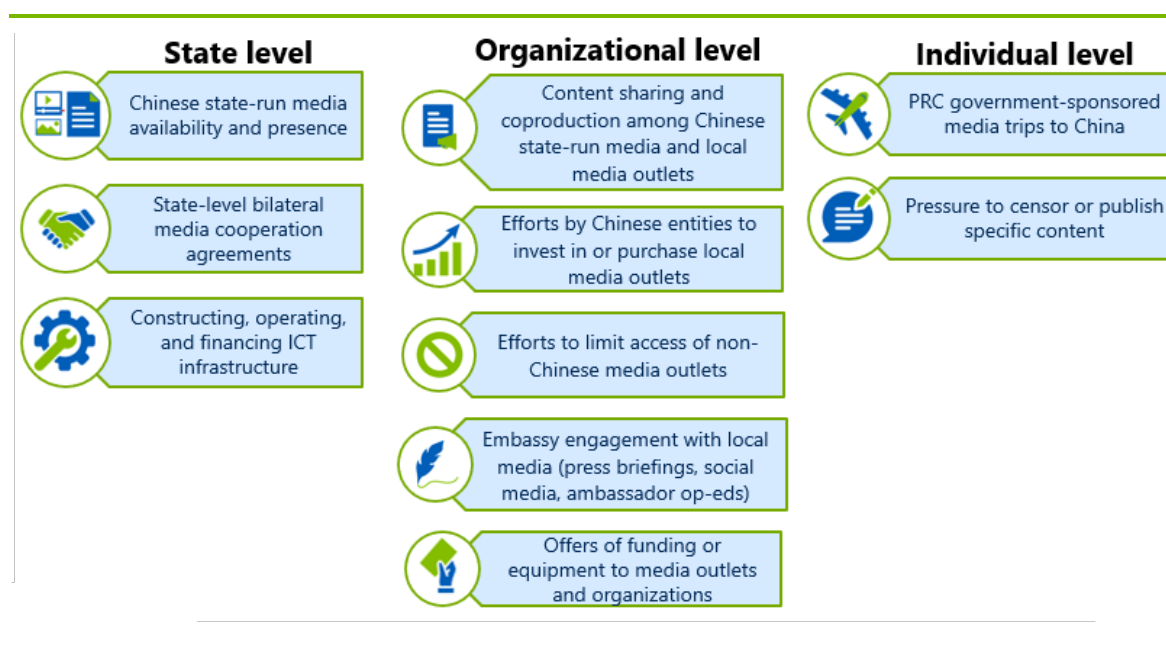
3.2 Levels of engagement

The CCP employs a complex mix of tactics to shape the Pacific Islands' media and information environment.¹³⁶ These tactics target three levels of the media landscape:

- **State level.** Tactics at the national level include signing bilateral media cooperation agreements, establishing the presence of PRC state-run media and making it available to local audiences, and financing, building, and operating local ICT infrastructure.
- **Organizational level.** Tactics at the organizational or media outlet level include content sharing and coproduction between PRC state-run media and local media outlets, attempts by PRC actors to invest in local media outlets, and PRC embassy engagement with the local press.
- **Individual level.** Tactics that target individual media practitioners include providing all-expense-paid trips to China and directly or indirectly pressuring media practitioners to censor their reporting or publish specific content.

Figure 6 identifies the specific CCP tactics targeted at each level.

Figure 6. Types of CCP activities to influence media in the Pacific Islands



Source: CNA.

3.3 State-level tactics

Signing bilateral media cooperation agreements

China’s bilateral and multilateral agreements with Pacific Island governments typically include a media-related element. For instance, the joint statement issued at the conclusion of the Third China-Pacific Island Countries Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in May 2025 included an agreement to expand media cooperation and exchanges with the 11 participating Pacific Islands.¹³⁷ The Chinese government has also signed separate bilateral agreements to expand cooperation in media and connectivity with the Cook Islands,¹³⁸ the FSM,¹³⁹ PNG,¹⁴⁰ Samoa,¹⁴¹ and Solomon Islands (see Table 3).¹⁴² The details of these agreements or how they are implemented are not made public.

Table 3. Pacific Islands that have signed bilateral or multilateral media cooperation agreements with China

Country	Description
Cook Islands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed to expand media cooperation and exchanges in 2025 Joint Statement of the Third China-Pacific Island Countries (PIC) Foreign Ministers’ Meeting¹⁴³ The <i>Action Plan 2025 -2030 for the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between the Cook Islands and the People’s Republic of China</i> states that the two sides will “promote cultural exchanges” in the film industry¹⁴⁴
Federated States of Micronesia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed to expand media cooperation and exchanges in 2025 Joint Statement of the Third China-PIC Foreign Ministers’ Meeting¹⁴⁵ In 2024, China Media Group signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on cooperation with the Public Information Office of the Micronesian Presidency¹⁴⁶ Also in 2024, agreed to broaden cooperation in media in a joint statement¹⁴⁷
Fiji	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed to expand media cooperation and exchanges in 2025 Joint Statement of the Third China-PIC Foreign Ministers’ Meeting¹⁴⁸ In September 2025, the Chinese ambassador to Fiji and the Fijian Minister for Information agreed to cooperate in digital and multimedia development. China will reportedly help the Ministry tackle misinformation, train Ministry officers as multimedia journalists, and set up a multimedia studio. Further details on the cooperation are not available¹⁴⁹
Kiribati	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed to expand media cooperation and exchanges in 2025 Joint Statement of the Third China-PIC Foreign Ministers’ Meeting¹⁵⁰
Nauru	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed to expand media cooperation and exchanges in 2025 Joint Statement of the Third China-PIC Foreign Ministers’ Meeting¹⁵¹
Niue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed to expand media cooperation and exchanges in 2025 Joint Statement of the Third China-PIC Foreign Ministers’ Meeting¹⁵²

Country	Description
Papua New Guinea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed to expand media cooperation and exchanges in 2025 Joint Statement of the Third China-PIC Foreign Ministers' Meeting¹⁵³ During a 2024 meeting with PNG Foreign Minister Justin Tkachenko, PRC Foreign Minister Wang Yi stated that China was willing to cooperate with PNG on information and communication technology¹⁵⁴ In 2023, agreed to enhance cooperation in media in a joint statement¹⁵⁵ In 2022, reportedly agreed to deepen cooperation in communications with China¹⁵⁶
Samoa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed to expand media cooperation and exchanges in 2025 Joint Statement of the Third China-PIC Foreign Ministers' Meeting¹⁵⁷ In November 2024, agreed to expand people-to-people exchanges and cooperation in media in a joint statement¹⁵⁸
Solomon Islands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed to expand media cooperation and exchanges in 2025 Joint Statement of the Third China-PIC Foreign Ministers' Meeting¹⁵⁹ Agreed to broaden cooperation in media in 2024 joint statement¹⁶⁰ A 2023 joint statement referenced media cooperation¹⁶¹
Tonga	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed to expand media cooperation and exchanges in 2025 Joint Statement of the Third China-PIC Foreign Ministers' Meeting¹⁶²
Vanuatu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed to expand media cooperation and exchanges in 2025 Joint Statement of the Third China-PIC Foreign Ministers' Meeting¹⁶³

Source: CNA.

Establishing the presence and availability of China's state-run media

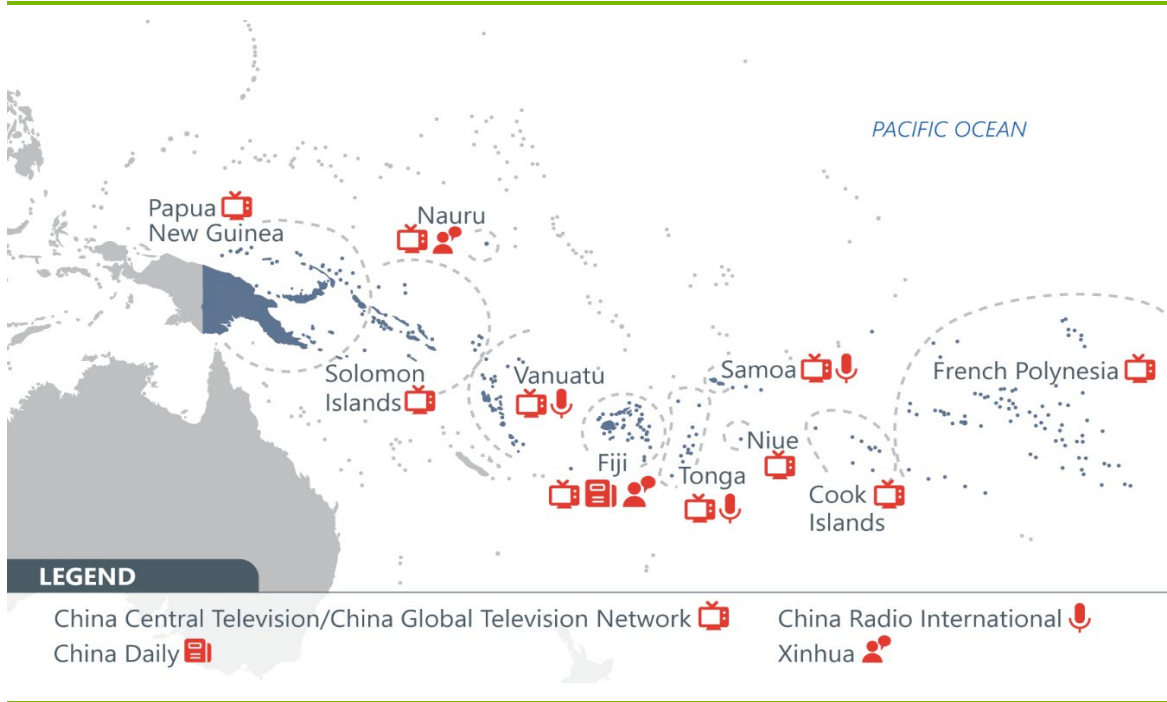
China has also sought to expand the presence of its state-run media outlets across the Pacific Island region. This is illustrated in Figure 7. The following Chinese state-run media outlets currently operate or broadcast across the region:

- **Xinhua:** The PRC's official news agency opened its first bureau in the Pacific Islands in Fiji in 2011. Notably, Xinhua and another PRC state-run outlet continued to operate in Fiji while the Media Industry Development Act, which restricted foreign media activity in Fiji, was in effect.¹⁶⁴ In January 2024, Xinhua established its second bureau in the region in Nauru.¹⁶⁵
- **China Radio International (CRI):** Broadcasts from China's official international radio broadcaster are available in at least Samoa, Tonga, and Vanuatu.
- **CCTV and CGTN:** China Central Television (CCTV), China's official national television broadcaster, and China Global Television Network (CGTN), China's official television station for foreign language broadcasting, are available in at least nine of the Pacific

Islands researched for this study, as demonstrated in Figure 7. These broadcasts are typically made available through Sky Pacific or Digicel TV.

Subject matter experts interviewed for this study indicated that Chinese state-run media outlets do not currently have a strong reach in the region and are not generally considered to be go-to sources for news.¹⁶⁶

Figure 7. China state-run media outlets in the Pacific Islands



Source: "Overseas Branches: Asia-Pacific Region" (派驻(境)外分支机构: 亚太地区), Xinhua, accessed May 2, 2025, <http://www.news.cn/xinhuashe/pzgwzfzjg.htm>; Sky Pacific, "TV Guide," accessed Oct. 30, 2024, <http://www.skypacific.tv/TvGuide>; "Vanuatu Media Guide," *BBC News*, Feb. 7, 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-16426202>; "China Media Group Sets up Bureau in Nauru," *CCTV*, Jan. 14, 2024, <https://www.cctvplus.com/news/20240124/8360821.shtml>; World Radio Map, <https://worldradiomap.com/>.

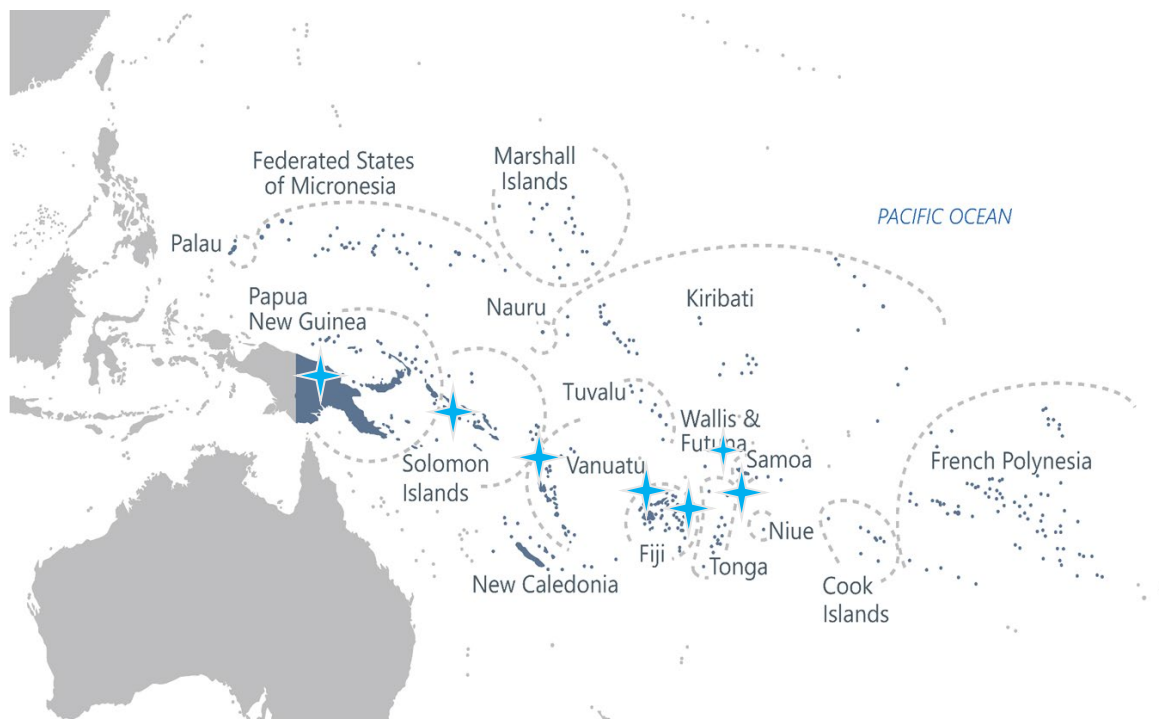
Note: Dotted lines are intended to delineate island groups and do not represent maritime boundaries; Nauru was not one of the 15 countries selected for this study but was included in the map, given the presence of a Xinhua bureau there.

Financing, building, and operating local ICT infrastructure

China has a significant footprint in the region's information and communication technologies (ICT) infrastructure. China has signed joint statements agreeing to engage in cooperation in the development of ICT infrastructure or been involved in the funding, construction,

maintenance, or operation of the ICT infrastructure of at least 8 of the 15 countries examined in this study (see Figure 8). This involvement includes PRC-based commercial entities such as telecommunications giant Huawei. For instance, according to a 2022 article published by *China Daily*, Huawei has provided unspecified “technologies” for Tongan telecommunications facilities.¹⁶⁷

Figure 8. Map of China’s involvement in regional ICT infrastructure in the Pacific Islands



Sources: Ma Si, “Huawei: Tonga to Resume Intl Voice Communications this Week,” *China Daily*, Jan. 19, 2022, <https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202201/19/WS61e7807ba310cdd39bc82070.html>; PRC Embassy in New Zealand, “Our embassy and the Niue government jointly held a series of celebrations for the 15th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Niue” (我馆与纽埃政府共同举办中国-纽埃建交 15 周年系列庆祝活动), PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dec. 2, 2022, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/zwbd_673032/gzhd_673042/202212/t20221209_10987650.shtml; “Analogue to Digital Migration,” Lowy Institute, <https://pacificaidmap.lowyinstitute.org/project/?id=CHN-Loan-PNG-29-22-220-22020>; “China Eximbank provides RMB 136 million government concessional loan for National Broadband Highway Project,” AidData, <https://china.aiddata.org/projects/37695/>; “Samoa National Broadband Highway,” Lowy Institute, <https://pacificaidmap.lowyinstitute.org/project/?id=CHN-Loan-WSM-32-20-220-22020>; Riley Duke, Alexandre Dayant, Nasirra Ahsan, Roland Rajah, Hervé Lemahieu, “Pacific Aid Map: 2024 Key Findings,” Lowy Institute, Nov. 19, 2024, <https://pacificaidmap.lowyinstitute.org/analysis/2024/key-findings/>; “Charge d’Affaires Ding Yonghua published a signed article ‘A Brighter Future Through the Belt and Road Initiative’ on Solomon Islands Media,” PRC Embassy in Solomon Islands, Oct. 18, 2023, http://sb.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/sgxw_3/202310/t20231018_11162901.htm.

Note: Dotted lines are intended to delineate island groups and do not represent maritime boundaries.

As is the case with PRC involvement in other aspects of the media landscape in the region, details about China's activities related to ICT infrastructure are often sparse. For instance, a 2022 press release from the PRC embassy in New Zealand (Cook Islands, Niue) asserted that the PRC had provided support to Niue for radio and television equipment maintenance without providing any additional details.¹⁶⁸ Similarly, in 2024, the Niuean government announced that the PRC had provided equipment for use in upgrading the broadcasting and television services of the state-owned Broadcasting Corporation of Niue.¹⁶⁹ Details about the equipment that China provided are not publicly available.

Papua New Guinea: China's involvement in the Digital Transformation Project

The PRC has a significant footprint in Papua New Guinea's ICT infrastructure and has played a large role in executing the country's Digital Transformation Project, a national initiative to modernize public services, increase government efficiency, and foster growth in the digital economy. For instance, the state-owned China State Construction Engineering Corporation constructed a new digital television facility for PNG's National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC). The project was funded through a \$69 million concessional loan from Export Import (Exim) Bank of China, which is administered by the PRC State Council; it was approved by the PRC government between 2021 and 2022. The construction of the facility is part of a larger project funded by Exim Bank of China to upgrade PNG's analog signal TV system to a digital TV system.¹⁷⁰ Exim Bank also funded the Kumul Domestic Submarine Cable System to PNG. The cable was installed by Huawei Marine, which is now known as HMN Tech.¹⁷¹

Samoa: China's involvement in the National Broadband Highway Project

In 2012, Exim Bank of China provided a \$25.31 million concessional loan for Samoa's National Broadband Highway Project, which sought to establish high-speed broadband connections for all government ministries and corporations, such as schools, hospitals, and emergency services. Huawei implemented the project, which was completed in June 2024.¹⁷²

Solomon Islands: China's involvement in the construction of a cell phone communications infrastructure

Exim Bank of China loaned Solomon Islands \$66 million to build 161 mobile communication towers, to be supplied and built by Huawei and the China Harbor Engineering Company. Construction began in 2023, and the first tower was launched in 2024.¹⁷³

Issue to watch: China's development of low Earth orbit (LEO) satellite networks

As US-based Starlink increases its availability around the globe, the Chinese government and China's SOEs are driving investment and innovation in LEO satellite networks. One such SOE is China Satellite Network Group, which aims to launch 13,000 LEO satellites by 2034.¹⁷⁴ Qianfan (known outside of China as SpaceSail), which is a satellite constellation run by Shanghai Spacecom Satellite Technology and backed by the Shanghai municipal government, had launched 90 satellites as of summer 2025, with mixed success. It has signed deals to operate in six countries across South America, Asia, the Middle East, and Central Asia and plans to sign agreements with more countries.¹⁷⁵ The possible proliferation of Chinese LEO satellite networks across the Pacific Islands would greatly enhance China's footprint in the region's ICT infrastructure.

3.4 Organizational-level tactics

Embassy press engagement

CNA observed that PRC embassies and consulates in 11 of the Pacific Islands selected for this study actively engage with local media in a number of routine ways. Such engagements include the following:

- **Interviews and signed articles:** PRC embassy and consulate officials routinely provide interviews and publish signed articles in local media. CNA observed examples of this in all 11 Pacific Island nations with a PRC diplomatic presence (Cook Islands,¹⁷⁶ Fiji,¹⁷⁷ French Polynesia,¹⁷⁸ Kiribati,¹⁷⁹ Micronesia,¹⁸⁰ Niue,¹⁸¹ Papua New Guinea,¹⁸² Samoa,¹⁸³ Tonga,¹⁸⁴ Solomon Islands,¹⁸⁵ and Vanuatu).¹⁸⁶
- **Meetings with local media:** PRC ambassadors and embassy officials meet with leaders of local media outlets and media organizations, as observed in Fiji,¹⁸⁷ Papua New Guinea,¹⁸⁸ Samoa,¹⁸⁹ Solomon Islands,¹⁹⁰ Tonga,¹⁹¹ and Vanuatu.¹⁹²
- **Press conferences:** PRC embassy officials hold press conferences in which they field questions from local reporters and brief local media outlets, as observed in Fiji,¹⁹³ Kiribati,¹⁹⁴ Papua New Guinea,¹⁹⁵ and Tonga.¹⁹⁶

Notably, the absence of a PRC diplomatic presence in Palau, Marshall Islands, New Caledonia, and Wallis and Futuna appears to correlate with a smaller CCP footprint in the local media and information environment. CNA did not observe any publicly reported CCP influence activities in the media and information environments of the Marshall Islands, New Caledonia, or Wallis and Futuna.

PRC embassy press engagement

Fijian media practitioner Stanley Simpson noted during the public event held by CNA and USP that the Chinese embassy in Suva routinely invites members of the local press to embassy-sponsored events and is “doing a much better job in informing and engaging Fiji media than the Australians, New Zealanders, and Americans.” He also stated that he and other Fijian news editors are in regular contact with Chinese diplomatic officials in Suva.¹⁹⁷

One way that PRC embassies and consulates engage local audiences in the Pacific Islands is through Facebook, the most popular social media platform in the region. However, based on a survey of recent activity, audience engagement with PRC embassy Facebook pages was limited to an average of fewer than 50 likes per post in 8 of the 11 countries with a PRC diplomatic presence (based on the 10 most recent posts observed as of August 23, 2025; see Table 4).

Table 4. PRC embassy Facebook pages and audience engagement, August 2025

Country	Number of Followers	Avg. Number of Likes Per Post*
Cook Islands (New Zealand)**	2,600	7.5
Federated States of Micronesia	476	0.8
Fiji	1,100	5.3
French Polynesia	N/A	N/A
Kiribati	24,000	448.8
Marshall Islands	N/A	N/A
Nauru	2,200	43.9
New Caledonia	N/A	N/A
Niue (New Zealand)	2,600	7.5
Palau	N/A	N/A
Papua New Guinea	4,200	115.2
Samoa	1,400	5
Solomon Islands	10,000	78.8
Tonga	4,800	20
Tuvalu	N/A	N/A
Vanuatu	1,400	40.7
Wallis and Futuna	N/A	N/A

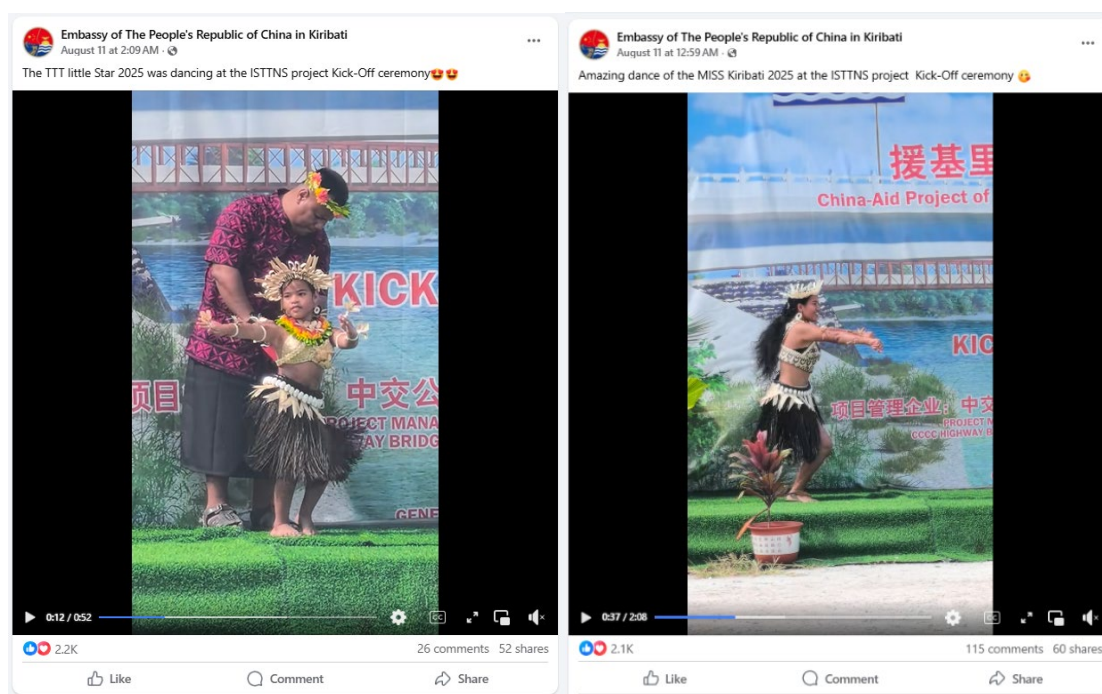
Source: Facebook.

*Looked at 10 most recent posts observed as of Aug. 23, 2025.

**The PRC Embassy in New Zealand also handles diplomatic relations with the Cook Islands and Niue.

Posts by the PRC embassies to Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, and Solomon Islands averaged the greatest number of likes. Among the posts that we looked at, two posts by the PRC embassy in Kiribati stood out as receiving the greatest number of likes by a margin of over 2,000. Both posts highlighted performances from i-Kiribati dancers during a kickoff ceremony for the Improvement of the South Tarawa Transport Network System (ISTTNS), a PRC-funded aid project (see Figure 9). In contrast, posts that received little to no engagement tended to focus on China without a local element.

Figure 9. Popular Facebook posts from PRC Embassy in Kiribati



Source: Embassy of The People's Republic of China in Kiribati, Facebook, Aug. 11, 2025, <https://www.facebook.com/your.ChineseEmbassyinKiribati/>.

Content sharing and coproduction with local media

One way that Chinese state-run outlets are likely attempting to improve their reach is by leveraging local media outlets as channels for dissemination. Much of this is done through content sharing agreements (i.e., a local Pacific Island outlet publishes content produced by a PRC state-run media outlet) and joint-production agreements (i.e., a local Pacific Island outlet and a PRC state-run outlet jointly produce content). Many of these agreements were signed by

the China Media Group, which is the parent organization of CCTV, CGTN, and CRI and is overseen by the State Council and administered by the CCP Central Propaganda Department.

CNA found evidence of content sharing and coproduction arrangements in seven of the Pacific Islands selected for this study, including the following:

- CGTN French coproduced special programs with a French Polynesian television channel about the Olympics and the Chinese New Year.¹⁹⁸
- Papua New Guinea’s National Broadcasting Corporation has published content produced by CCTV.¹⁹⁹
- During his July 2024 visit to China, the prime minister of Solomon Islands signed a memorandum of understanding to facilitate content exchange, coproduction, internships, training, and technological cooperation between the China Media Group and the Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation, the country’s national broadcaster.²⁰⁰

Efforts to invest in media outlets

Despite the CCP’s use of this tactic elsewhere around the world, efforts by Chinese entities to invest in or purchase local media outlets in the Pacific Islands appear to be rare.²⁰¹ CNA identified only one confirmed instance of such an effort via publicly available sources. In 2018, the founder of a Palauan newspaper and a local Chinese expatriate agreed to set up a new media group called Palau Media Group. The largest shareholder in the new media group was a Chinese company with ties to a CCP military and public security apparatus called Overseas Chinese Big Data Group. The deal appears to have failed due to the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.²⁰² Additionally, a media practitioner from the region told CNA that a Chinese entity purchased Tonga’s state-owned *Tonga*

Figure 10. Front page of July 15, 2025, edition of *Tonga Chronicle* (Kolonikali Tonga)



Source: *Tonga Chronicle* Facebook post, July 14, 2025, <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1377477893897062&set=pcb.1377480660563452>.

Chronicle (Kolonikali Tonga) in late 2024. CNA has been unable to verify this purchase.²⁰³ After an apparent yearlong period of inactivity, the *Tonga Chronicle's* website and Facebook page began actively posting new content in March 2025. A July 2025 post by the newspaper's official Facebook account showing the front page of the weekly newspaper features coverage of the ceremony commissioning the China-Aid Tongatapu Wind Power Project (see Figure 10).

As mentioned earlier (section 2.2.4), China may have attempted to purchase the Pacific operations of major telecommunications firm Digicel, which provides service across many countries in the Pacific Islands. Although never publicly corroborated by Beijing or Digicel, the firm was reportedly considering selling its Pacific operations to PRC state-owned telecommunications conglomerate China Mobile.²⁰⁴ In 2021, Australian telecommunications company Telestra announced that it would acquire Digicel's Pacific unit with financial support from the Australian, US, and Japanese governments.²⁰⁵

Limiting non-PRC media access to events involving PRC officials

On multiple occasions beginning in 2018, Chinese officials have sought to limit—sometimes forcibly—local and international media outlets' access to events involving PRC officials in and across the region. Examples are the following:

- **Papua New Guinea:** In October 2018, PRC embassy staff in Port Moresby reportedly removed journalists from the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and a local Papua New Guinea media outlet who were trying to film the arrival of PRC Foreign Minister Wang Yi at the airport. The outlets had been invited to film the event.²⁰⁶
- **Papua New Guinea:** During the November 2018 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit, the Chinese delegation prevented several accredited media outlets—including ABC and a local newspaper, *The National*—from covering several events involving Chinese leader Xi Jinping, including a dinner with his counterparts from eight Pacific Islands.²⁰⁷
- **Fiji:** During a Taiwan National Day celebration held at the Grand Pacific Hotel in Suva, Fiji, on October 8, 2020, Chinese embassy staff clashed with Taiwanese diplomats and obstructed journalists, leaving one Taiwan diplomat injured.²⁰⁸
- **Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Samoa, and Fiji:** During his May 2022 visits to Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Samoa, and Fiji, PRC Foreign Minister Wang Yi did not take questions from Pacific Islands journalists, who were instructed at the beginning of each press conference that no questions would be permitted.²⁰⁹ During Wang's press conference with Fiji's prime minister, Chinese officials blocked and shouted down Pacific journalists who attempted to ask questions.²¹⁰

China not alone in blocking Pacific Island reporters

It is worth noting that China is not the only country to have blocked Pacific Island reporters from accessing foreign leaders. At the 2025 Pacific Islands Forum leaders meeting in Solomon Islands, Australian officials blocked Pacific Island journalists from attending Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's press conference. Only Australian reporters were allowed to attend the press conference. The move was met with strong opposition from Pacific Island journalists, with the chair of a regional media organization calling it "shameful."²¹¹

Offers of money and equipment

CNA has identified several publicly reported instances of the PRC government disbursing money and equipment to local Pacific Island media outlets, including the following examples:

- ***Solomon Islands:*** In July 2022, the PRC government gave a Solomon Islands media outlet funding to upgrade aging equipment. The proposal, which was submitted by the outlet to the PRC embassy in Honiara for 1,150,000 Solomon Islands dollars (US\$206,300), stated that the aging equipment was "curtailing news flow about China's generous and lightning economic and infrastructure development in Solomon Islands."²¹² During a discussion with CNA, an Australian journalist indicated that the PRC embassy disbursed this funding in exchange for positive coverage of China.²¹³
- ***Solomon Islands:*** Also in 2022, the PRC embassy in Honiara reportedly gave another Solomon Islands media outlet \$27,400 in cash to pay for new equipment. Previously, in 2019, the embassy had given the same outlet nearly \$12,000 worth of equipment, including computers.²¹⁴
- ***Tonga:*** In 2019, the PRC embassy in Tonga provided the Tonga Broadcasting Commission (TBC), a government-owned broadcasting station, with an assistance grant for renovating a corridor in the TBC building.²¹⁵
- ***Vanuatu:*** In July 2025, the Hong Kong-based GX Foundation donated media equipment to a local Vanuatu media outlet.²¹⁶ GX Foundation is an NGO that carries out Belt and Road Initiative projects and is chaired by a vice chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, a political advisory body overseen by the CCP.²¹⁷

"One of the things we have asked for [of the Australians] is infrastructure support. Like, at some stage, we said, look we've got so much training. Can we have some equipment?...We're not even asking for \$100,000, we're asking for a few cameras here, some computers, some things to just help us with our work....We don't have the equipment we're getting trained for. So, it's not matching....That has opened up some room with China."

–Stanley Simpson, director, Mai TV, Fiji

3.5 Individual-level tactics

PRC-sponsored trips

PRC government-sponsored trips to China for Pacific Island media practitioners appear to be common across the region. Through publicly available information and discussions with subject matter experts, CNA identified specific instances of journalists from the Cook Islands, the FSM, Fiji, Kiribati, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu attending PRC government-sponsored trips to China. These trips ranged in length from one week to four months and often included meetings with PRC foreign affairs and propaganda officials and journalism training and seminars. Details surrounding the training content are typically very limited. Examples of such trips are the following:

- In 2017, the PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the State Council Information Office hosted journalists from PNG, Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, and the FSM for a weeklong tour of China.²¹⁸
- In 2023, journalists from PNG, Fiji, Kiribati, and Vanuatu participated in a four-month training program in China.²¹⁹
- In May 2025, a Samoan media practitioner joined 25 other international media leaders and experts on a 10-day seminar program across China. The trip was organized by the International Department of the CCP Central Committee.²²⁰
- In June 2025, six journalists from five media outlets in Tonga, Fiji, Vanuatu, Nauru, and Solomon Islands participated in an exchange program in Beijing for international journalists. During the program, the journalists met with the director of the Pacific Island Division within the PRC's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.²²¹

Many of these trips were organized by the China International Press Communication Center (CIPCC), an outreach program that seeks to educate foreign journalists on China. CIPCC is administered by the China Public Diplomacy Association, a nonprofit PRC organization that

consists of scholars, experts, and influential personalities engaged in China’s public diplomacy. The association is responsible for mobilizing, coordinating, and organizing public diplomacy activities in support of China’s overall diplomatic efforts.²²²

Subject matter experts suggested that the trips do not appear to have a significant impact on the views of journalists or the stories that participants write afterwards, instead describing the trips as opportunities to travel. For instance, a media practitioner from the Cook Islands stated that colleagues who had participated in trips to China might have published some cultural stories following their travels but did not appear to write pro-China content as a result of the trip.²²³ Barbara Dreaver, a New Zealand-based reporter who covers the Pacific Islands and has facilitated training programs for Pacific Island journalists, noted that PRC-sponsored trips are largely unsuccessful in shaping reporting due to the high turnover rate among journalists.²²⁴

Pressure to report (or refrain from reporting) specific content

CNA observed two instances of a PRC actor pressuring a Pacific Island media practitioner or outlet to censor reporting or to publish specific content. According to investigative reporting from the news website *In-Depth Solomons*, a diplomat from the PRC embassy in Honiara called the owner of a local Solomon Islands newspaper in January 2024 with “concerns” after the newspaper republished an article from ABC about Taiwan’s presidential election. Following the call, the owner emailed the newspaper’s staff, stating that China is a “supporter” of the paper and asking the staff to be “cautious of the news we publish especially with regards to Taiwan’s election.” The Chinese embassy also sent the same newspaper and other Solomon Islands news outlets an email asking for their cooperation in covering the Taiwan election and requesting that they publish two articles about the election written by the PRC State Council Taiwan Affairs Office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. At least two Solomon Islands outlets published the two articles.²²⁵

Assertions that Fiji is free of influence

During the CNA-USP event in Suva, Fijian news editor Stanley Simpson said that he and five fellow Fijian news editors had not experienced any efforts by China to “influence anything against media principles.”²²⁶ Following the event, the news website of the state-owned Fiji Broadcasting Corporation published an article asserting that “China has been a strong and open partner” to Fijian media and has maintained “a level of transparency in its engagement.”²²⁷

4. How can observers assess the CCP's success?

The CCP is actively trying to expand its footprint in the media landscape of the Pacific Islands in a variety of ways. The logical question is: Are these efforts achieving Beijing's desired effect? Influence is inherently difficult to define and therefore measure. However, it is possible to determine whether Beijing's efforts are resulting in the publication of China's preferred narratives by local media outlets. In this section, we offer a potential framework for assessing the effectiveness of China's efforts to influence local media outlets in the Pacific Islands.

China's Master Narratives

Broadly speaking, the objectives of China's global propaganda campaign are to foster a positive image of China, counter and delegitimize its critics, and support Beijing's efforts to achieve its national goals. To achieve these objectives, Beijing has at least four enduring strategic narratives that it tells about itself.²²⁸

"China is peaceful." Beijing wants the world to believe that China is inherently peaceful, in order to counter concerns about its growing military power and regional assertiveness.

"Cooperation with China is beneficial." Beijing wants the international community to believe that its approach to cooperation is mutually beneficial and a "win-win." This narrative seeks to counter criticism that its aid and investment practices are exploitative.

"China is a responsible member of the international community." Officials point to China's contributions to peacekeeping operations, anti-piracy missions, and COVID-19 relief as evidence of this claim. China's media seek to portray China as a leader in the international community and allay concerns that it seeks to reshape the global order.

"China is a better partner to developing countries." China's state-run media frequently contrast Beijing's approach to foreign policy and development with that of the United States and other long-standing partner nations, portraying its aid as coming without strings attached or "interference in a country's internal affairs." Beijing promotes this narrative to position China as the partner of choice and to deflect criticism that its aid and investment practices are predatory and exploitative.

In addition to these pro-China narratives, ***China's media also reflexively seek to undermine and delegitimize Beijing's competitors, especially the United States.*** Typical Chinese media reporting on the United States and its partners and allies revolves around narratives such as the following: The United States seeks to maintain its global hegemony; the US approach to cooperation is self-serving; and US assistance to developing countries comes with political strings attached.²²⁹

4.1 Testing a notional framework

To get a general sense of the impact of China’s efforts, we selected a sample of media outlets that had identifiable engagement with China state-run media. Our sample included 13 local media outlets in 11 Pacific Islands that had at least one of the following types of engagement with China state entities:

- Signed cooperation agreements with PRC state-run media
- Received money or equipment (to include potential investment) from PRC entities
- Engaged in content sharing or coproduction of content with PRC state-run media

We then examined the content that these outlets produced during a 60-day window (January 19–March 20, 2025), determined by the scope of our project for signs that they were serving as routine channels for distribution of China’s narratives. Specifically, we looked for the following:

- Republished content from the local PRC embassy
- Republished content produced by China’s state-run media outlets
- Number of positive articles about China
- Number of articles critical of China

Table 5 lists the media outlets in our sample, the type of engagement with China that we identified, and the results of our survey.

Table 5. Snapshot of selected local media outlets’ reporting during 60-day period (Jan. 19–Mar. 20, 2025)

Media Outlet (Country)	Type of Engagement	Published PRC Embassy Content	Published PRC Media Content	# Positive Articles About China	# Articles Critical of China
<i>Solomon Star</i> (Solomon Islands)	Received funds	No	No	34	3
<i>Savali News</i> (Samoa)	Content sharing; possible joint production	Yes	Yes	18	0
<i>Island Sun</i> (Solomon Islands)	Received funds and equipment	No	No	16	1
<i>Samoa Observer</i> (Samoa)	Content sharing/paid content	Yes	No	8	3
<i>Fiji Sun</i> (Fiji)	Content sharing	No	No	3	0

Media Outlet (Country)	Type of Engagement	Published PRC Embassy Content	Published PRC Media Content	# Positive Articles About China	# Articles Critical of China
Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation (Solomon Islands)	Cooperation agreement	No	No	3	0
<i>Fiji Times</i> (Fiji)	Content sharing	No	No	2	0
Broadcasting Corporation of Niue (Niue)	Received equipment	No	No	1	0
Vanuatu Broadcasting and Television Corporation (Vanuatu)	Cooperation agreement	No	No	1	1
National Broadcasting Corporation (PNG)	Content sharing; received funds	No	No	0	0
<i>Tia Belau</i> (Palau)	Joint venture (failed)	No	No	0	0
Tahiti Nui TV (French Polynesia)	Joint production	No	No	1	5

Source: CNA.

4.2 Initial takeaways

This very limited look at content produced by media outlets that have been at the receiving end of China’s overtures suggests that Beijing is having some success promoting pro-China narratives, but it is uneven. At one end of the spectrum is *Savali News* (Samoa), which published content from the PRC embassy, republished content from PRC state-run media, published 18 stories that portrayed China positively, and included zero stories that were critical of China.²³⁰ Of the 13 media outlets we examined, it was the only one for which we found evidence of all four indicators. The *Solomon Star* published more stories about China than any of the other media outlets during the 60-day timeframe that we examined. The overwhelming majority of these stories—31 out of 34—portrayed China positively. Two other outlets also published a significant number of positive stories about China with comparatively little critical coverage. Solomon Islands’ *Island Sun* published 16 positive news stories about China and only one story containing critical coverage. *Samoa Observer* both republished PRC embassy content and published more positive stories (8) than critical stories (3) about China. Four other outlets published only positive stories about China during the period examined, but the number of stories was limited to between 1 and 3.

It is worth noting that most of the media outlets in our sample—9 out of 13—did not devote a significant amount of coverage to China. Three outlets did not publish any stories focused on China during the period examined, and six others published six or fewer stories. This suggests that one potential factor limiting China’s efforts to disseminate its messages to local audiences may be a general lack of interest in stories about China.

4.3 Looking ahead

The notional framework for tracing the potential impact of engagement with China on local media reporting offered in this section is just a first step. Expanding the monitoring window beyond the 60 days that we were able to examine would provide a clearer and more detailed picture of the frequency with which China’s preferred narratives are reaching audiences in the Pacific Islands via local media outlets. Expanding the scope of analysis to include other indicators such as negative stories about China’s critics would also provide additional insight into the extent to which Beijing is attempting to bias audiences in the Pacific Islands against long-standing partners such as Australia, New Zealand, the United States, and Japan.

5. Conclusion

5.1 What is unique about China's efforts?

One question that we were repeatedly asked during our research was: “How is what China is doing to engage media in the Pacific Islands different from what other countries are doing?” After all, other countries also provide journalists with training opportunities, fund travel, and invest in ICT infrastructure development. Based on our research, China's approach to engaging media in the Pacific Islands is notable in three ways:

- **Scope.** Beijing is employing a wide variety of tactics, techniques, and actors to shape the regional media landscape, and it touches nearly every country we looked at. We identified activities aimed at engaging media at the state, organizational, and individual levels in at least 8 of the 15 countries that we examined. China's vast state-run media complex and propaganda system play a key role in these efforts. China's tactics run the gamut from offering cash to physically blocking access to PRC officials and disrupting public events.
- **Lack of transparency.** The way in which Beijing engages with Pacific Island governments and media lacks transparency. Details about bilateral media cooperation agreements were consistently unavailable. In addition, unlike long-standing partners such as Australia, New Zealand, the United States, and Japan, China does not make details about funding public, so it is unclear how much money Beijing is funneling into the region's media.
- **Objectives.** Perhaps the greatest difference lies in the objectives of China's efforts. China's engagement with Pacific media is primarily aimed at shaping public discussion in ways that further China's interests—not at supporting media development for its own sake. With one of the least free media environments in the world, China is poorly positioned to support the development of independent professional media.²³¹

A critical implication of these differences for Pacific Islands media practitioners is that the short-term benefits of China's assistance carry the long-term risk of eroding their autonomy and missing opportunities to develop lasting solutions to the challenges that they face.

5.2 Gauging China's progress

Our research suggests that China has had some success shaping local media discussion in the Pacific Islands, but this success has been relatively limited and uneven. Veteran Pacific

journalist Barbara Dreaver offered the assessment that “China has pockets of influence, but it is not widespread at all.”²³² This mixed success is due to a combination of factors that present China with challenges and opportunities for pursuing its objectives in the media landscape.

Factors that limit China’s impact

Factors that limit China’s impact on local media landscapes include the following:

- **Limited resonance of state-run media.** Chinese state-run media has not yet established a strong reach in the region and does not compete with established sources of news such as ABC, RNZ, or TVNZ.
- **Suspicion of China.** Experts and media practitioners mentioned a variety of suspicions about China, including concerns that China is looking to export authoritarianism, exploit local economies, and capture political elites, and that it is anti-Christian.
- **Strength of journalistic norms.** Multiple Pacific journalists voiced their commitment to maintaining their independence and journalistic integrity. Local media practitioners and experts described journalists in the region as “courageous” and “proud” and unlikely to be susceptible to undue influence.
- **Lack of interest in China.** China’s efforts tend to be focused on promoting stories about China. Our research suggests that local audiences are more interested in things that are happening closer to home and may not have a large appetite for China-centric news.
- **Continued engagement of long-standing partners.** Media development programs such as Australia’s PACMAS and training programs run by New Zealand’s Pacific Cooperation Broadcasting Limited and TVNZ, as well as new and innovative business models such as that represented by Pasifika TV, continue to figure prominently in the regional media landscape and bolster the region’s independent press.

“We are open to partnerships, but we will resist or reject any attempt to influence us or affect our independence. Now we need to be held to that standard, and the public needs to keep us to that standard....We don’t want to fall into a trap because we want to hold on to our integrity. We are indeed watching the activities and events that the Chinese are involved in. We’re seeing some evidence of elite capture almost similar to what other countries are doing. But I think the Chinese are doing it much better.”

–Stanley Simpson, director, Mai TV, Fiji

Factors that could work in China’s favor

Despite these constraints, there are multiple factors that have the potential to work in China’s favor and bear close monitoring going forward. These factors include the following:

- **Financial state of regional media.** Local experts and media practitioners described the financial state of the region’s media as being the worst it has been in history. The dire straits of the region’s media outlets may make them more receptive to China’s offers of funds in order to avoid shutting down.
- **Staffing challenges.** Many subject matter experts cited high attrition rates in Pacific newsrooms, low salaries in the media sector, and inexperience among Pacific journalists as key challenges to Pacific media outlets’ resilience and survival.
- **Frustration with long-standing partners.** Some Pacific media practitioners expressed frustration with the types of support they receive from long-standing partners and the amount of time it takes those partners to respond to requested adjustments. They also expressed concern about the US review of its foreign assistance programs and the impact that it will have on the support that Pacific media receive.
- **The decisions of Pacific Island governments.** Perhaps the most significant factor is the decisions made by Pacific leaders. Several local experts and media practitioners suggested to us that, given the political culture of many Pacific Islands, China has had the greatest success shaping media discussion in countries where it has managed to cultivate close ties with the political elite, such as Solomon Islands, Nauru, and Kiribati.

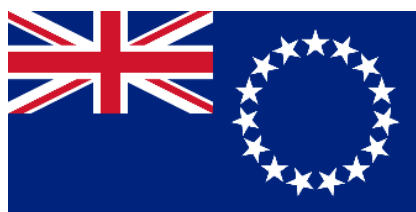
“The biggest threat to Pacific media right now, and that opens them up to other influences, is the restrictions and control that [are] being put on them by their own governments and by the region....The pattern I am seeing now is as bad as it was in the early 2000s to 2008....In the last year, I have noticed a huge difference in control.”

–Barbara Dreaver, Pacific correspondent, TVNZ

Given the rapidness with which the region’s media landscape is evolving and the intensity of Beijing’s efforts, China’s footprint could expand quickly, depending on how these factors play out over the near term. Although Beijing may be limited to “pockets of influence” now, its influence is likely to grow.

Appendix: Country Media Landscape Overviews

Cook Islands



- Total population (2024 est.): 16,800 (residents)²³³
- Official languages: English and Cook Islands Maori²³⁴
- Literacy rate (2016): 95 percent²³⁵
- Internet penetration (2021): 64.8 percent²³⁶
- Mobile phone subscriptions (per 100 people, 2021 est.): 100²³⁷

Regulations on the media and information environment in the Cook Islands. The Cook Islands has a strong sense of press freedom and the role of the press as the fourth estate. Its constitution guarantees freedom of speech and expression,²³⁸ and it was the first Pacific Island nation to introduce freedom of information legislation.²³⁹ The government does not appear to seek to control media narratives or actors through extensive policies or regulatory framework, and none of the islands' media organizations are owned by the government.²⁴⁰

However, some instances of tension between the government and journalists have occurred. In 2020, Cook Island politicians proposed a motion to ban Rashneel Kumar, the editor of the privately owned *Cook Islands News*, from parliament for writing a story that exposed the travel privileges enjoyed by spouses of members of parliament from the outer islands. The politicians dropped the proposed ban after an international outcry arose and Speaker of Parliament Nikki Rattle found Kumar's story to be factual.²⁴¹

Regulations on foreign actors in the Cook Islands' media and information environment. Some limitations restrict, but do not fully prevent, foreign actors in the domestic information environment. For instance, nonlocal entities seeking to provide media services in the Cook Islands are required to register with the Business Trade and Investment Board. By law, the hire or sale of audio and video production is a "reserved investment area" for Cook Islanders only.²⁴²

PRC presence in the Cook Islands’ media and information environment.

As shown in Table 6, the People’s Republic of China (PRC) embassy has engaged with the local press in the Cook Islands and local reporters have participated in PRC government-sponsored media trips to China. In September 2024, a press release from the Cook Islands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration reported that the PRC and the Cook Islands were in the process of finalizing a “cooperation arrangement,” with potential areas for cooperation including digital connectivity, infrastructure, and cultural exchanges.²⁴⁴ The two sides formally signed the *Action Plan 2025–2030 for the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between the Cook Islands and the People’s Republic of China* in February 2025. In the text of the agreement released by the Cook Islands’ government, the two sides pledge that they will “promote cultural exchanges between our creative industries, including through training and capacity building for the Cook Islands in film making and creative industries.”²⁴⁵ Table 6 describes some of China’s activities in Cook Islands media; Table 7 lists Cook Islands media outlets.

Spotlight: Evidence that China is uninterested in acquiring local media outlets?

The *Cook Islands News* was put up for sale in July 2023 and remains for sale as of August 2025.²⁴³

Table 6. China’s activities in the Cook Islands’ media and information environment

Type of Activity	Evidence
State-level bilateral media cooperation agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In September 2024, the Cook Islands government reported that the PRC and the Cook Islands were in the process of finalizing a cooperation agreement that included digital connectivity, infrastructure, and cultural exchanges.²⁴⁶ According to the Joint Statement of the Third China-PIC Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in May 2025, the PRC and participating countries (including the Cook Islands) agreed to expand cooperation and exchanges in media.²⁴⁷ Details regarding this proposed cooperation are not available. The 2025 agreement <i>Action Plan 2025–2030 for the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between the Cook Islands and the People’s Republic of China</i> includes training and capacity building in film making and creative industries.²⁴⁸
Chinese state-run media availability and presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> China Global Television Network (CGTN) is available in the Cook Islands through Sky Pacific.²⁴⁹ In the context of original reporting, local media outlets such as the <i>Cook Islands News</i> references reporting by Chinese state-run media and reprint images from Xinhua and China Central Television (CCTV).²⁵⁰

Type of Activity	Evidence
Embassy engagement with local media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On at least one occasion, the PRC ambassador to New Zealand, the Cook Islands, and Niue has accepted an interview from a local Cook Islands media outlet.²⁵¹
PRC government-sponsored media trips to China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to subject matter experts from the region, reporters from a Cook Island media outlet have attended all-expense paid trips to China.

Source: CNA.

Local media outlets

Table 7. Cook Islands media outlets

Outlet	Type of Media	Description	Ownership
<i>Cook Islands Herald</i> (https://www.facebook.com/CookIslandsHerald/)	Newspaper	Locally produced content, often critical of the government; some content on regional issues published from <i>New Zealand Herald World News</i> ²⁵²	Owned by George Pitt of Pitt Media Group, a family-owned media company ²⁵³
<i>Cook Islands News</i> (https://www.cookislandsnews.com/)	Newspaper	English-language news from Rarotonga and the outer islands; publishes six days per week with a daily paid circulation of 2,300 ²⁵⁴	Privately owned by Cook Islands News Ltd.; John Woods, a New Zealand national, acts as publisher ²⁵⁵
Cook Islands Television (CITV) (Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/cookislandstelevisionnews/)	TV, free-to-air	De facto national station; content includes local and international news, dramas, documentaries, and some content from Australia; ²⁵⁶ live streams several broadcasts per week on Facebook ²⁵⁷	Owned by Elijah Communications Ltd., which, as of 2013, was a subsidiary of Pitt Media ²⁵⁸
Matariki FM (https://thenonstopradio.com/radio/matariki-fm)	Radio	Primarily Polynesian music; rebroadcasts some news and other programs from Radio New Zealand Pacific (RNZ Pacific) ²⁵⁹	Owned by Mervin Communications Ltd. ²⁶⁰
Radio Cook Islands	Radio	A "responsive source of news" and an outlet for	Acquired by Elijah Communications, a

Outlet	Type of Media	Description	Ownership
		Cook Islands culture and language; approximately 80% of content broadcast in Cook Islands Maori; ²⁶¹ hourly news programs and content from RNZ Pacific ²⁶²	company with religious connections ²⁶³
Sky Pacific (http://www.skypacific.tv/)	TV, paid	Offers more than 25 foreign television channels, including CGTN, to subscribers ²⁶⁴	Owned by Digicel Pacific, which was acquired by Australian telecommunications company Telstra in a deal partially financed through Australian, Japanese, and US government support ²⁶⁵
Vaka TV (https://www.vakatv.com/)	TV, free-to-air	Content sourced from international networks (including Australia) and local material; broadcasts live streamed on YouTube ²⁶⁶	Owned and operated by Dave and Vina Reuther ²⁶⁷

Source: CNA.

Federated States of Micronesia



- Total population (2024): 99,603²⁶⁸
- Official language: English²⁶⁹
- Literacy rate (2024): 95.1 percent²⁷⁰
- Internet penetration (2023): 40.4 percent²⁷¹
- Mobile phone subscriptions (per 100 people, 2021 est.): 19²⁷²

Regulations on media and information environment in the FSM. The constitution of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) “provides for freedom of expression but does not refer specifically to speech or the press.”²⁷³ The government, however, generally respects these rights, and, according to Freedom House, the “news media operate freely.”²⁷⁴ The 2014 Telecom Act established an independent regulatory authority—the Telecommunication Regulations Authority—to “promote competition, ensure that prices reflect efficient costs, manage universal access, and provide oversight and management of the telecommunications sector.”²⁷⁵

Regulations on foreign actors in the FSM’s media and information environment. The country’s regulatory environment provides low barriers to entry for foreign entities to establish a media presence locally or to transmit content from afar. The Division of Communications within the Department of Transportation, Communications, and Infrastructure is responsible for licensing and reviewing ownership transactions—particularly those that “could diminish the level of competition in a relevant market.”²⁷⁶ The telecommunications industry in the FSM is open to foreign investment; it is one of five economic sectors on a national “green list,” which indicates sectors that are easy to access and invest in.²⁷⁷

PRC presence in the FSM’s media and information environment. Despite the FSM’s close relationship with the United States as a Compact of Free Association (COFA) state, the PRC has engaged in several activities in the FSM’s media and information environment, as demonstrated in Table 8. Table 9 shows FSM’s local media outlets.

Table 8. China’s activities in the FSM media and information environment

Type of Activity	Evidence
State-level bilateral media cooperation agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the Joint Statement of the Third China-PIC Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in May 2025, the PRC and participating countries (including the FSM) agreed to expand cooperation and exchanges in media.²⁷⁸ Details regarding this proposed cooperation are not available. • In 2024, China Media Group (CMG) signed an MOU on cooperation with the Public Information Office of the Micronesian Presidency. According to the CMG release on the MOU, the agreement is meant to advance media cooperation between the two countries.²⁷⁹ • Also in 2024, the two countries agreed to broaden cooperation in media and other fields, according to a joint statement.²⁸⁰ • Details of these agreements are not publicly available.
Embassy engagement with local media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officials at the at the Chinese Embassy in the FSM frequently publish articles in an FSM news outlet.²⁸¹
PRC government-sponsored media trips to China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2017, the PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the State Council Information Office hosted journalists from Papua New Guinea (PNG), Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, and the FSM for a weeklong tour of China.²⁸²

Source: CNA.

Local media outlets

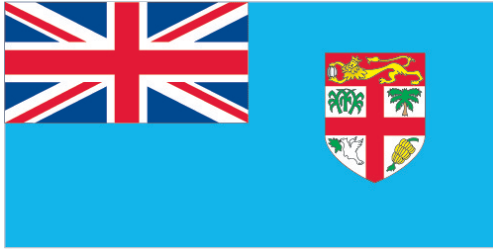
Table 9. FSM media outlets

Outlet	Type of Media	Description	Ownership
Internet Protocol Television (IPTV)–PacificaTV (https://www.fsmtc.fm/cable/IPTV)	TV, paid	Coverage in Pohnpei, Chuuk, and Yap; carries Chinese channel Xing Kong as well as NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation), TV Monde, Al Jazeera, and CNN ²⁸³	Owned by FSM Telecommunication Corporation (FSMTC), ²⁸⁴ a state-owned company ²⁸⁵
MyTV Kosrae	TV, paid	Coverage is available to most villages in Kosrae, except Walung village; ²⁸⁶ carries same channels as PacificaTV ²⁸⁷	Owned by FSMTC ²⁸⁸

Outlet	Type of Media	Description	Ownership
<i>Keselehlie Press</i> (https://issuu.com/kpress fsm)	Newspaper	The FSM's sole newspaper, based in Pohnpei; published fortnightly ²⁸⁹	As of January 2025, the managing editor is William Jaynes ²⁹⁰
V6AH, Pohnpei (Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/V6AHPOHNPEI/)	Radio	Broadcasts segments from the Office of the Speaker of the Pohnpei State Legislature, Office of the Governor, Office of the President, and US Embassy ²⁹¹	Owned and operated by the government of the FSM's Pohnpei State (Pohnpei Public Broadcasting Corporation), in partnership with FSMTC ²⁹²
V6AI, Yap	Radio	Local news	Owned and operated by the government of the FSM's Yap State (Yap Public Broadcasting Station), in partnership with FSMTC ²⁹³
V6AJ, Kosrae	Radio	Local news	Owned and operated by the government of the FSM's Kosrae State (Kosrae Public Broadcasting Station), in partnership with FSMTC ²⁹⁴
V6AK, Chuuk	Radio	Local news	Owned and operated by the government of the FSM's Chuuk State (Chuuk Public Broadcasting Station), in partnership with FSMTC ²⁹⁵

Source: CNA.

Fiji



- Total population (2024 est.): 951,611²⁹⁶
- Official languages: English, iTaukei (Fijian), Fiji Hindi²⁹⁷
- Literacy rate (2018): 99.1 percent²⁹⁸
- Internet penetration (2022): 85.2 percent²⁹⁹
- Mobile phone subscriptions (per 100 people, 2021 est.): 107³⁰⁰

Regulations on media and information environment in Fiji. The Fijian Constitution (2013) upholds the right to freedom of speech, expression, thought, opinion, and publication.³⁰¹ In the past, the Media Industry Development Act had been used to ban reporting that was critical of the government or deemed harmful to public order. However, this act was repealed in 2023.³⁰²

Regulations on foreign actors in Fiji's media and information environment. Since the repeal of the Media Industry Development Act, it appears that no legal restrictions remain on foreign actors in the Fijian media environment. Before the Act's repeal, the Fijian government sought to amend the decree by doing away with its punitive aspects while retaining restrictions that prohibited foreign ownership of media organizations. Specifically, these restrictions required that the editors of media organizations be residents of Fiji and that 90 percent of the ultimate beneficial ownership of a media organization be held by Fijian citizens.³⁰³ However, the proposed continuation of ownership restrictions was opposed by the Fiji Media Association, which advocated for a complete repeal.³⁰⁴

PRC presence in Fiji's media and information environment. PRC media entities have a pronounced presence in Fiji, as documented in Table 10. Until January 2024, when Xinhua established a bureau in Nauru, Fiji had been home to the only Xinhua bureau in the Pacific Island countries.³⁰⁵ The Fiji bureau was established in 2011 and continued to operate while the Media Industry Development Act, which restricted foreign media activity in Fiji, was in effect. In fact, in 2018, Xinhua and *China Daily* were the only foreign media outlets allowed to operate in Fiji.³⁰⁶ CGTN is also available in Fiji through Sky Pacific.³⁰⁷ Table 10 shows PRC media involvement in Fiji; Table 11 lists Fijian media outlets.

Spotlight: PRC efforts to discredit Australian reporting in 2024

As detailed by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI), in spring 2024, *60 Minutes Australia* aired a report that investigated links between organized crime and Chinese policing in Fiji.³⁰⁸ In response, the PRC embassy in Fiji released two videos in which it cast the investigation as “full of false accusations,” questioned *60 Minutes Australia’s* “news ethics,” and suggested that the investigation was instigated by Canberra to hinder Fiji-China ties.³⁰⁹ Articles published in state-run PRC media echoed these claims.³¹⁰ Some Fijian media outlets reported on the incident, including information about both the *60 Minutes Australia* investigation and the response from the PRC embassy in Suva, Fiji’s capital.³¹¹

Table 10. China’s activities in Fiji’s media and information environment

Type of Activity	Evidence
State-level bilateral media cooperation agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the Joint Statement of the Third China-PIC Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in May 2025, the PRC and participating countries (including Fiji) agreed to expand cooperation and exchanges in media.³¹² Details regarding this proposed cooperation are not available. • In September 2025, the Chinese ambassador to Fiji and the Fijian Minister for Information agreed to cooperate in digital and multimedia development. China will reportedly help the Ministry tackle misinformation, train Ministry officers as multimedia journalists, and set up a multimedia studio. Further details on the cooperation are not available.³¹³
Chinese state-run media availability and presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CGTN is available in Fiji through Sky Pacific.³¹⁴ • Xinhua has a bureau in Suva.³¹⁵
Content sharing and coproduction among Chinese state-run media and local media outlets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Xinhua and <i>China Daily</i> established a news exchange agreement with a Fijian paper.³¹⁶ • Xinhua content is republished by a Fijian paper.³¹⁷ • Media outlets from Guangdong have reportedly codeveloped at least one TV program, called “Fiji Face-to-Face,” with unnamed Fijian media outlets.³¹⁸

Type of Activity	Evidence
Embassy engagement with local media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The PRC ambassador to Fiji has published articles in a Fijian news outlet,³¹⁹ accepted interviews from Fijian media outlets (as well as media outlets from other PICs),³²⁰ and met with the leadership of several Fijian media organizations.³²¹ Officials at the PRC embassy to Fiji have accepted interviews and fielded questions from Fijian reporters, and they have briefed Fijian media outlets on developments in China and Chinese-Fijian relations.³²²
PRC government-sponsored media trips to China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2017, the PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the State Council Information Office hosted journalists from PNG, Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, and the FSM for a weeklong tour of China.³²³ In 2023, journalists from PNG, Fiji, Kiribati, and Vanuatu participated in a four-month exchange program in China organized by the China International Press Communication Center.³²⁴ In 2024, journalists from Vanuatu, PNG, and Fiji attended a four-month tour of China organized by the China International Press Communication Center and the China Public Diplomacy Association.³²⁵ In June 2025, six journalists from five media outlets in Tonga, Fiji, Vanuatu, Nauru, and Solomon Islands participated in an exchange program in Beijing for international journalists coordinated by the China International Press Communication Center. During the program, the PIC journalists met with the Director of the Pacific Island Division within the PRC's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.³²⁶
Possible involvement in constructing, operating, and financing local information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to a joint statement of an August 2024 meeting between PRC President Xi Jinping and Fijian Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka, the PRC and Fiji agreed to expand exchange and cooperation in infrastructure, capacity building, and cultural promotion. Whether this conversation has led to any tangible outcomes is unclear.³²⁷
Offers of funding or equipment to media outlets and organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2011, the PRC ambassador to Fiji gifted various media equipment, including 10 portable computers, 20 cameras, 10 desktop computers, and 10 TVs, to the Fijian government.³²⁸

Source: CNA.

Local media outlets

Table 11. Fiji media outlets

Outlet	Type of Media	Description	Ownership
FBC Radio (https://www.fbcnews.com.fj/)	Radio	Broadcasts a total of six radio stations, two in each of the three major languages; includes local and international content, sports, and music ³²⁹	State-owned (Fiji Broadcasting Corporation) ³³⁰
FBC TV (https://www.fbcnews.com.fj/)	TV, free-to-air	Content in three national languages and more than 30 local shows for free-to-air channels; content from ABC, Al Jazeera, and (New Zealand government-funded) Pasifika also broadcast ³³¹	State-owned (Fiji Broadcasting Corporation) ³³²
<i>Fiji Daily</i> (<i>Feiji Ribao</i> ; 斐济日报)	Newspaper	Chinese-language newspaper published by <i>Fiji Sun</i> , with office in Suva; ³³³ member of the Global Chinese Media Cooperation Union, which is operated by the United Front Work Department ³³⁴	Feng Liu and Michael Hong Lian Yang were coproprietors as of 2018 ³³⁵
Fiji One News (https://fijionenews.com.fj/)	TV, free-to-air	Local and regional focus; sports ³³⁶	Fiji Television Limited ³³⁷
<i>Fiji Sun</i> (https://fijisun.com.fj/)	Newspaper	Pro-Fiji First party; broadcasts domestic and regional news; has information-sharing agreements with Xinhua; has republished content from Xinhua and <i>China Daily</i> ³³⁸	CJ Patel Group, a consortium of investors in regional businesses ³³⁹
<i>Fiji Times</i> (https://www.fijitimes.com/)	Newspaper	Domestic and regional news; has republished Xinhua content ³⁴⁰	Motibhai Group (previously Rupert Murdoch's News Corp.) ³⁴¹

Outlet	Type of Media	Description	Ownership
Fijivillage (https://www.fijivillage.com/)	News website	Private news site; ³⁴² primarily covers domestic news and sports, with some coverage of world news ³⁴³	Communications Fiji Limited, associated with FM96, LegendFM, VitiFM, Navtarang, and Radio Sargam (see next row) ³⁴⁴
FM96, LegendFM, VitiFM, Navtarang, and Radio Sargam (https://www.fijivillage.com/)	Radio	Broadcasts in three major languages; airs music and news programs	Communications Fiji Limited
Mai TV	TV	Reaches 90% of Fiji's islands via the government-owned Walesi platform. Broadcasts local, Pacific, and international content, with a primary focus on major sporting events such as the Super Rugby and Pacific Netball Series	Co-owned by Stanley Simpson and the New Methodist Church ³⁴⁵
Radio Pasifik (https://podcasters.spotify.com/pod/show/radiopasifik)	Radio	The official radio station of the University of the South Pacific; ³⁴⁶ broadcasts Pacific music, regional news, and other local content ³⁴⁷	Run by students, with faculty support, at the University of the South Pacific ³⁴⁸
Sky Pacific (http://www.skypacific.tv/)	TV, paid	Offers more than 25 foreign television channels, including CGTN, to subscribers ³⁴⁹	Owned by Digicel Pacific
<i>The Jet Newspaper</i> (https://www.thejetnewspaper.com/)	Newspaper	Community newspaper based in the tourism capital of Nadi ³⁵⁰	<i>The Jet</i> receives "tremendous support" from the Nadi Town Council and Chamber of Commerce and Industry ³⁵¹

Source: CNA.

French Polynesia



- Total population (2024 est.): 303,540³⁵²
- Official language: French³⁵³
- Literacy: Unavailable
- Internet penetration (2021 est.): 72.7 percent³⁵⁴
- Mobile phone subscriptions (per 100 people, 2022 est.): 107³⁵⁵

Regulations on media and information environment in French Polynesia. French Polynesia is governed under the French Constitution, which protects both the freedom of expression and freedom of the press.³⁵⁶ These freedoms are generally respected by local governments in the French Territories. In French Polynesia, some restrictions on media were imposed by then-President Gaston Flosse in the 1990s; these restrictions have since been lifted.³⁵⁷

Regulations on foreign actors in French Polynesia’s media and information environment. Although French Polynesia is governed by French national laws, the local government controls specific policies and legislation on foreign investment and involvement. As of 2019, foreign purchases of real estate in French Polynesia required French government authorization.³⁵⁸

PRC presence in French Polynesia’s media and information environment. As shown in Table 12, a Chinese state-run media outlet has coproduced content with a French Polynesian outlet, and the Chinese Embassy has engaged with French Polynesian media outlets. Table 13 lists French Polynesian media outlets.

Table 12. China’s activities in French Polynesia’s media and information environment

Type of Activity	Evidence
Content sharing and coproduction among Chinese state-run media and local media outlets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CGTN French has coproduced special programs with a French Polynesian television channel.³⁵⁹
Embassy engagement with local media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chinese Consul in Papeete has accepted interviews with several French Polynesian news outlets.³⁶⁰ • On at least one occasion, the Chinese Consul has published an article in a French Polynesian news outlet.³⁶¹

Source: CNA.

Local media outlets

Table 13. French Polynesia media outlets

Outlet	Type of Media	Description	Ownership
Outre-mer La Première (La 1ère) (https://la1ere.francetvinfo.fr/)	TV (free-to-air), radio, and news website	A network of radio and TV stations operating in all French overseas territories; broadcasts local and French news, as well as entertainment programs from France ³⁶²	France Télévisions, the French public national broadcaster ³⁶³
Radio 1 Tahiti (https://www.radio1.pf/), Tiare FM (https://www.tiarefm.pf/)	Radio	Radio stations and websites; primarily broadcast local and regional news and music ³⁶⁴	Sonia Aline is the “director general” of both Radio 1 Tahiti and Tiare FM ³⁶⁵
Tahiti Nui TV (TNTV) (https://www.tntv.pf/)	TV	French- and Tahitian-language programs, including news and entertainment; ³⁶⁶ has also had a “partnership” with CGTN since 2016 ³⁶⁷	Tahiti Nui TV’s articles of incorporation mandate that at least 50% and no more than 85% of the company be owned by the government of French Polynesia; ³⁶⁸ current publication director is Karl Tefaatau ³⁶⁹
Tahiti-Infos (https://www.tahiti-infos.com/)	News website and streaming content	Free French-language content added daily; covers French Polynesia, France, the Pacific, and international news; ³⁷⁰ likely derives significant portion of revenue from online advertising ³⁷¹	Fenua Communications; director is Sarah Moux, and manager is her father Albert Moux, ³⁷² who is also CEO and majority owner of Pacific Energy; as of 2017, his son, Patrick Moux, was president of Vodafone in French Polynesia ³⁷³

Source: CNA.

Kiribati



- Total population (2024 est.): 116, 545³⁷⁴
- Official languages: I-Kiribati, English³⁷⁵
- Literacy: Unavailable
- Internet penetration (2021 est.): 54 percent³⁷⁶
- Mobile phone subscriptions (per 100 people, 2022 est.): 49³⁷⁷

Regulations on media and information environment in Kiribati. The Kiribati constitution protects freedom of expression.³⁷⁸ In practice, this freedom is generally respected; however, the media do face some restrictions.³⁷⁹ The Kiribati government passed the Newspaper Registration Act in 1988, requiring newspapers to register with the government. An amendment to the act passed in 2002 requires that nothing can be printed that “offends against good taste or decency or is likely to encourage or incite to crime or to lead to disorder or to be offensive to public feeling.”³⁸⁰ Most major media outlets are state owned, but a small number of private outlets and foreign radio services are also available.³⁸¹

Regulations on foreign actors in Kiribati’s media and information environment. Following decentralization in 1993, the information environment has been open to foreign actors. Actors broadcasting content through any form of telecommunications network are required to obtain a license from the Telecommunications Authority of Kiribati.³⁸² According to the Communications Act (2012), once approved and licensed to operate in Kiribati, any actor who uses communications networks or media services to transmit messages that are false or offensive is liable to be fined up to US\$1,000 and/or imprisoned for up to three months.³⁸³ According to the Foreign Investment Act (2018), no restrictions on foreign actors owning or operating telecommunications or media businesses exist. However, all foreign investments must receive prior approval from the Kiribati government.³⁸⁴

According to media reporting, Kiribati’s government has restricted the access of foreign journalists. After a ferry sank in waters near Kiribati in January 2018, the Kiribati government delayed or revoked permits for foreign media out of concern that their reporting could be critical of the government. These actions specifically targeted media actors from New Zealand and Australia.³⁸⁵ Similarly, in 2019, Australian journalists who had arrived in Kiribati to cover the nation’s decision to cease its recognition of Taiwan were restricted to their hotel because they allegedly lacked the requisite permits.³⁸⁶ More recently, in 2024, the government banned foreign diplomatic visits in the run-up to the national election amid tensions with Western countries over Kiribati’s deepening ties to China. Kiribati subsequently lifted the ban, and US

diplomats have since returned to the country.³⁸⁷ Although not directed at the media, the move suggests a continued sensitivity to potential foreign criticism.³⁸⁸

PRC presence in Kiribati’s media and information environment. China’s official foreign broadcaster CGTN is available for free via the main national television broadcaster, Kiri One TV. The Kiribati government has agreed to media cooperation and exchanges with the PRC, and journalists from Kiribati have already participated in exchange programs in China. The PRC embassy actively engages with local media, as shown in Table 14. Meanwhile, Table 15 lists Kiribati’s media outlets.

Table 14. China’s activities in Kiribati’s media and information environment

Type of Activity	Evidence
Chinese state-run media availability and presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In May 2024, CGTN and CCTV became available in Kiribati for free through Kiri One TV.³⁸⁹
State-level bilateral media cooperation agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kiribati agreed to expand media cooperation and exchanges with China in the 2025 Joint Statement of the Third China-PIC Foreign Ministers’ Meeting.³⁹⁰
Embassy engagement with local media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The PRC embassy in Kiribati has published articles in local newspapers³⁹¹ and held briefings for local media outlets.³⁹² The PRC ambassador to Kiribati has been interviewed by local media.³⁹³
PRC government-sponsored media trips to China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2023, journalists from PNG, Fiji, Kiribati, and Vanuatu participated in a four-month exchange program in China organized by the China International Press Communication Center.³⁹⁴

Source: CNA.

Local media outlets

Table 15. Kiribati media outlets

Outlet	Type of Media	Description	Ownership
Newair FM 89	Radio	Primarily music, with some limited news and other local content ³⁹⁵	Owned by Kiribati’s founding president, Ieremia Tabai, and a board of shareholders ³⁹⁶

Outlet	Type of Media	Description	Ownership
Radio Kiribati/BPA News (https://right-click.com.au/rcPlayer2/index.php?c=kiribati mw/news.bpa.org.ki/)	Radio	Airs hourly news bulletins and other local content, including entertainment programs, government bulletins, and music; ³⁹⁷ also rebroadcasts Radio New Zealand (RNZ) news bulletins ³⁹⁸	State-owned (Broadcasting and Publications Authority) ³⁹⁹
<i>Te Uekera</i> (https://www.facebook.com/uekera/)	Newspaper	National newspaper with content on local issues, gender, sport, and regional and international news; publishes in I-Kiribati ⁴⁰⁰	State-owned by BPA ⁴⁰¹
Kiri One TV/Wave TV	TV, primarily paid; one free-to-air channel	Offers 22 paid channels with primarily international content; one free-to-air channel focuses on local news and affairs ⁴⁰² and broadcasts Pasifika TV ⁴⁰³	Local ownership; assisted by PNG-based Click Pacific, ⁴⁰⁴ receives support from the Secretariat of the Pacific Community's Pacific Way TV program and Pasifika TV ⁴⁰⁵

Source: CNA.

Marshall Islands



- Total population (2024 est.): 33,294⁴⁰⁶
- Official language: Marshallese⁴⁰⁷
- Literacy: 98.3 percent⁴⁰⁸
- Internet penetration (2023 est.): 66 percent⁴⁰⁹
- Mobile phone subscriptions (per 100 people, 2021 est.): 38⁴¹⁰

Regulations on media and information environment in Marshall Islands. The government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) generally respects the freedom of the press, with state-affiliated media existing alongside private media.⁴¹¹ The government mandates registration and licensing for radio and TV station owners, and the National Telecommunications Authority—a private corporation with significant ownership by the government—has a monopoly on the building, installation, maintenance, and operation of all domestic telecommunications services.⁴¹²

Regulations on foreign actors in Marshall Islands’ media and information environment. Under the Foreign Investment Business License Amendment Act of 2000, foreigners seeking to invest in the RMI must apply for a Foreign Investment Business License and are restricted from investing in certain small-scale businesses, such as bakeries, vehicle rentals, and laundromats. Foreigners are also prohibited from purchasing land in the RMI; instead, they must lease land from private landowners.⁴¹³ No restrictions on foreign investment in RMI media outlets appear to exist.

PRC presence in Marshall Islands’ media and information environment. The PRC appears to have a limited presence in the Marshall Islands’ media and information environment, with the only observed instance of PRC presence detailed in Table 16. The low level of presence may be attributed in part to the suspension of diplomatic relations between the PRC and the Marshall Islands in 1998 and the subsequent lack of a Chinese diplomatic presence in the country. Table 17 lists Marshall Islands’ media outlets.

Table 16. China’s activities in the Marshall Islands’ media and information environment

Type of Activity	Evidence
Chinese state-run media availability and presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCTV-4 is available through the Marshalls Broadcasting company, the Marshall Islands’ national television and radio broadcaster.⁴¹⁴

Source: CNA.

Local media outlets

Table 17. Marshall Islands media outlets

Outlet	Type of Media	Description	Ownership
Armed Forces Network Kwajalein (https://home.army.mil/kwajalein/?CID=639)	Radio and TV	TV channels showing top-rated US television shows from the four major broadcast networks and several cable networks; ⁴¹⁵ operates on Kwajalein and Ebeye Islands ⁴¹⁶	Armed Forces Radio and Television Service, which is operated by the United States Army ⁴¹⁷
POWER 103.5 FM (https://www.facebook.com/power103.5fm/)	Radio	Music and talk shows	Six9Too Productions, an audiovisual company
V7AB Radio Marshall, AM 1098	Radio	Local public radio established in 1960s	Government-funded public service broadcaster ⁴¹⁸
MHTV	TV, paid	Subscription video on-demand service with more than 40 channels of entertainment, news, sports, and educational content produced overseas ⁴¹⁹	National Telecommunications Authority, a private corporation whose majority shareholder is the Marshall Islands government ⁴²⁰
NTA Youtube (https://www.youtube.com/@NTAMedia)	Online videos	Videos of local cultural, government, and sporting events	Videos created by the National Telecommunications Authority
<i>Marshall Islands Journal</i> (https://marshallislandsjournal.com/)	Newspaper	Weekly print newspaper with website	Founded by American Joe Murphy; owned by Murphy's daughter, a Marshallese citizen ⁴²¹

Source: CNA.

New Caledonia



- Total population (2024 est.): 304,167
- Official language: French
- Literacy rate (2015): 96.9 percent⁴²²
- Internet penetration (2021 est.): 82.0 percent
- Mobile phone subscriptions (per 100 people, 2021 est.): 90⁴²³

Regulations on media and information environment in New Caledonia. As an overseas collectivity of France, New Caledonia is governed under a version of the French Constitution—which protects both the freedom of expression and the freedom of the press—that was modified through the 1998 Nouméa Accord to grant New Caledonia greater autonomy.⁴²⁴ However, the reality of the media environment in New Caledonia is shaped by its long-standing tensions over independence. According to the BBC, few neutral media outlets in New Caledonia exist, with most tending toward polarization around the issue of independence. In mid-2013, journalists from the daily newspaper *Les Nouvelles Calédoniennes* went on strike after perceived political pressure from the French High Commissioner, whom they believed had interfered with the paper’s independence and commitment to equitable political coverage.⁴²⁵ New Caledonia also lacks laws that provide specific protection for journalists.⁴²⁶ During May 2024 riots and clashes between pro-independence and loyalist groups, journalists in New Caledonia reported being harassed and even attacked by members of both camps.⁴²⁷ In response to the May 2024 unrest, the French government imposed a state of emergency in New Caledonia, which included a temporary ban on the use of TikTok.⁴²⁸ French authorities asserted that the app was being used to spread disinformation.⁴²⁹

Regulations on foreign actors in New Caledonia’s media and information environment. France maintains the right and ability to review certain foreign investments in New Caledonia related to critical infrastructure, electronic communications, and other installations pertaining to national security.⁴³⁰

PRC presence in New Caledonia’s media and information environment. Despite sustained efforts by the PRC to develop economic and political influence in New Caledonia, as documented by New Zealand scholar Anne Marie-Brady, no publicly available evidence exists of PRC presence in New Caledonia’s media and information environment.⁴³¹ However, we have included a list of New Caledonian media outlets in Table 18.

Local media outlets

Table 18. New Caledonia media outlets

Outlet	Type of Media	Description	Ownership
Canal+ Caledonie (https://www.canalplus-caledonie.com/nc)	TV, paid	More than 150 channels for subscribers, including content from ABC, BBC, and NHK World ⁴³²	Canal+ Group, an audiovisual media group owned by French media conglomerate Vivendi ⁴³³
Outre-mer La Première (La 1ère) (https://la1ere.francetvinfo.fr/)	TV (free-to-air), radio, and news website	A network of radio and TV stations operating in all French overseas territories; broadcasts local and French news, as well as entertainment programs from France ⁴³⁴	France Télévisions, the French public national broadcaster ⁴³⁵
<i>Les Nouvelles Calédoniennes</i> (https://www.lnc.nc/)	Newspaper, magazine, news website	Local, regional, French, and international news in print and online; lifestyle and culture magazines ⁴³⁶	Published by the New Caledonian company GD Connexion; current president is Jean-Pierre Dang, “publication director” is Cédric de Vives, and editor is Nicolas Lebreton; ⁴³⁷ <i>Les Nouvelles Calédoniennes</i> is part of the Groupe Melchior ⁴³⁸
NRJ Nouvelle Calédonie (https://www.nrj.nc/)	Radio	Music and entertainment talk shows, primarily targeting listeners age 15–35 ⁴³⁹	Part of the Groupe Melchior
Actu NC (https://actu.nc/)	News website and weekly magazine ⁴⁴⁰	News website and weekly magazine covering local politics, culture, economics, and other issues ⁴⁴¹	Owned by Société ERIS ⁴⁴²

Source: CNA.

Niue



- Total population (est. 2022): 2,000⁴⁴³
- Official languages: Niuean and English
- Literacy (2016): 99 percent⁴⁴⁴
- Internet penetration (est. 2022): 90 percent⁴⁴⁵
- Mobile phone subscriptions (per 100 people, 2023 est.): 83.5⁴⁴⁶

Regulations on media and information environment in Niue. The constitution of Niue does not guarantee speech or press freedoms; however, our research suggests that the government respects these freedoms in practice.⁴⁴⁷ Furthermore, as of 2022, more than 90 percent of the Niuean population used the internet, which the government does not appear to restrict or censor.⁴⁴⁸ The government is the dominant actor in the small domestic information space, given that no resource base exists to support an independent domestic press.⁴⁴⁹

Regulations on foreign actors in Niue’s media and information environment. Although no restrictions on foreign investment appear to exist in any sector, foreign companies must register with the Niuean government to lawfully invest or operate in the country.⁴⁵⁰

PRC presence in Niue’s media and information environment. As shown in Table 19, there exists some PRC involvement in Niue’s media and information landscape. Table 20 lists Niue’s media outlets.

Table 19. China’s activities in Niue’s media and information environment

Type of Activity	Evidence
State-level bilateral media cooperation agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the Joint Statement of the Third China-PIC Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in May 2025, the PRC and participating countries (including Niue) agreed to expand cooperation and exchanges in media.⁴⁵¹ Details regarding this proposed cooperation are not available.
Chinese state-run media availability and presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CGTN is available in Niue through Sky Pacific.⁴⁵²
Embassy engagement with local media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PRC ambassador to New Zealand, Cook Islands, and Niue has been interviewed by the Broadcasting Corporation of Niue.⁴⁵³

Type of Activity	Evidence
Constructing, operating, and/or financing local ICT infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A 2022 press release from the PRC Embassy in New Zealand, Cook Islands, and Niue asserted that the PRC had provided unspecified support to Niue for radio and television equipment maintenance.⁴⁵⁴ In 2024, the Niuean government announced that the PRC had provided equipment for Niue to upgrade the broadcasting and television services of the state-owned Broadcasting Corporation of Niue.⁴⁵⁵ Details about the equipment provided are not publicly available.

Source: CNA.

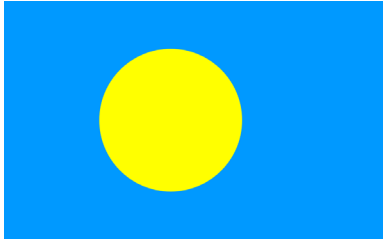
Local media outlets

Table 20. Niue media outlets

Outlet	Type of Media	Description	Ownership
<i>Niue Star</i>	Newspaper	Publishes weekly and covers local news ⁴⁵⁶	Privately owned by Michael Jackson, Niuean reporter and former member of Niuean parliament ⁴⁵⁷
Radio Sunshine (https://tvniue.com/)	Radio	As of 2018, broadcasts news bulletins from RNZ Pacific and Radio Australia ⁴⁵⁸	State-owned (Broadcasting Corporation of Niue (BCN)) ⁴⁵⁹
Sky Pacific (http://www.skypacific.tv/)	TV, paid	Offers more than 25 foreign television channels, including CGTN, to subscribers ⁴⁶⁰	Owned by Digicel Pacific
Television Niue (https://tvniue.com/)	TV	Rebroadcasts Pasifika TV; ⁴⁶¹ also broadcasts BCN news programs ⁴⁶²	Operated by state-owned BCN ⁴⁶³

Source: CNA.

Palau



- Total population (2024): 21,864⁴⁶⁴
- Official languages: Palauan, English, Sonsoral (in Sonsoral State), Tobian (on Tobi Island), Angaur, and Japanese (in Angaur State)⁴⁶⁵
- Literacy rate (2015): 96.6 percent⁴⁶⁶
- Internet penetration (2024): 67 percent⁴⁶⁷
- Mobile phone subscriptions (per 100 people, 2022 est.): 133⁴⁶⁸

Regulations on media and information environment in Palau. Speech and press freedoms are protected by law in Palau, and the country has even championed media rights in the broader region.⁴⁶⁹ The internet is not restricted or censored; however, access has traditionally been hampered by high costs and a lack of connectivity outside the main islands.⁴⁷⁰ Although the freedoms afforded to the press have supported the development of an independent media sector, domestic outlets often face financial difficulties.⁴⁷¹ In a development condemned by the International Federation of Journalists as a mark against press freedom in Palau, Palau's largest private corporation, Surangel and Sons Company, founded by the father of Palau's President Surangel Whipps Jr., announced it had lodged a defamation lawsuit against leading newspaper *Island Times* and its publisher on October 31, 2024. Surangel and Sons lodged the suit in response to an October 29, 2024, article that shared the company's leaked tax documents.⁴⁷² The Supreme Court of Palau dismissed the lawsuit in November 2025.⁴⁷³

Regulations on foreign actors in Palau's media and information environment. Existing regulations allow the government to manage both domestic and foreign actors in the information environment. The country's 2017 Telecom Law requires all operators of telecommunications networks and services to obtain a license.⁴⁷⁴ The law stipulates that "no person...in Palau or between any place in Palau and any place outside Palau" can broadcast or operate media services without the appropriate licensing.⁴⁷⁵ Foreign investors must receive government approval and maintain no less than US\$500,000 on the island in investments.⁴⁷⁶ Foreign investors are required to obtain a Foreign Investment Act Clearance and submit necessary documentation, such as passport copies, personal financial statements, and a detailed business plan.⁴⁷⁷

PRC presence in Palau's media and information environment. Palau is one of three Pacific Islands that maintains official diplomatic relations with Taiwan and does not recognize the PRC (the other two are the Marshall Islands and Tuvalu). Although China does not have diplomatic representation in Palau, we did identify one publicly reported example of attempted PRC

involvement in Palau’s media landscape, as outlined in Table 21. Table 22 lists Palau’s media outlets.

Table 21. China’s activities in Palau’s media and information environment

Type of Activity	Activity
Efforts by Chinese entities to invest in or purchase local media outlets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2018, the founder of a Palauan newspaper and a local Chinese expatriate agreed to set up a new media group called Palau Media Group. The largest shareholder in the new media group was a Chinese company affiliated with a Chinese Communist Party (CCP) military and public security apparatus called Overseas Chinese Big Data Group. The deal appears to have failed under the economic pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic.⁴⁷⁸

Source: CNA.

Local media outlets

Table 22. Palau media outlets

Outlet	Type of Media	Description	Ownership
MBTV/Diaz Broadcasting Palau https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCaE_saUJjtTsn59-t_vGEg	TV, YouTube channel	Broadcasts interviews of domestic political figures conducted by the station owner, Alfonso Diaz ⁴⁷⁹	Owned and operated by former Palauan senator Alfonso Diaz ⁴⁸⁰
Oceania TV http://www.oceaniatv.net/	TV, free-to-air	Broadcasts education and cultural content ⁴⁸¹	Majority owned by Jeff Barabe and Kassi Berg, American citizens ⁴⁸²
Palau National Communications Corporation (Palau Island Cable TV) https://www.pnccpalau.com/	TV, paid	Broadcasts 30 foreign stations, the majority of which are US channels (for example, CNN International, National Geographic, and ESPN) ⁴⁸³	State-owned ⁴⁸⁴
Tia Belau https://www.tiabelaunews.com/	Newspaper	Publishes twice weekly ⁴⁸⁵	Founded by Moses Uludong and owned by TBN Publishing Company ⁴⁸⁶

Outlet	Type of Media	Description	Ownership
Island Times (https://islandtimes.org/)	Newspaper and website	Publishes twice weekly in English; largest newspaper in Palau	Leilani Reklai ⁴⁸⁷
Voice of Palau (T8AA-FM)	Radio	Rebroadcasts content produced by Radio Australia ⁴⁸⁸	Co-owned by the Government of Palau and T8AA

Source: CNA.

Papua New Guinea



- Total population (2024): 10,046,233⁴⁸⁹
- Official languages: Tok Pisin, English, Hiri Motu, and 839 indigenous languages⁴⁹⁰
- Literacy rate (2017): 70 percent⁴⁹¹
- Internet penetration (2021): 32 percent⁴⁹²
- Mobile phone subscriptions (per 100 people, 2021 est.): 48⁴⁹³

Regulations on media and information environment in PNG. Although the constitution of Papua New Guinea (PNG) supports freedom of the media and expression, violence against journalists and restrictions in the information environment have limited the access and reach of both local and foreign media actors.⁴⁹⁴ Former prime ministers Peter O'Neill and Michael Somare both censored the internet (e.g., Facebook) in some form.⁴⁹⁵ This censorship was reportedly aimed at weeding out accounts or information that exposed government corruption inquiries.⁴⁹⁶ Since taking office as prime minister in May 2019, James Marape and his administration have targeted journalists they deem too critical of the government. The government also enforces regulations on media content. Laws on censorship, for instance, require media programs to conform to standards of “morality, decency, and propriety generally accepted by a reasonable adult person.”⁴⁹⁷ Several pieces of legislation have also exerted negative pressure on freedoms of the press and speech. A defamation clause passed as part of the 2016 Cybercrime Code Act, for instance, includes penalties for defamatory actions committed online or via smartphone—a stipulation that has been criticized as an attempt to control media freedoms.⁴⁹⁸ In 2024, the PNG Supreme Court upheld the law, ruling that it does not contravene the constitutional right to freedom of expression.⁴⁹⁹ In addition, in February 2023, the Department of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) proposed a new media policy that gives the government the “power to investigate complaints against media outlets, issue guidelines for ethical reporting, and enforce sanctions or penalties for violations of professional standards.”⁵⁰⁰ The policy has been heavily criticized and was in its fifth draft as of late 2024.⁵⁰¹ The Department of ICT announced the implementation of the new National Media Development Policy on July 1, 2025. At the time of writing, the content of the final draft of the policy was not publicly available.⁵⁰²

Regulations on foreign actors in PNG's media and information environment. Individuals entering PNG are required to apply for a journalist visa if undertaking paid or unpaid journalism activities.⁵⁰³ On the visa application, foreign journalists must state the purpose of their visit, and it must be supported by a PNG sponsor. Before submitting the application, the PNG Prime Minister's Office and Department of Foreign Affairs must approve the visit. The

government has adopted policies for licensing that are preferential to PNG citizens. Foreigners can apply for media licenses with local partners (in the form of joint ventures), or as foreign enterprises.⁵⁰⁴ According to media reports, the new media development policy may impose licensing requirements on all journalists.⁵⁰⁵

PRC media presence in PNG’s media and information environment. The PRC maintains a significant presence in PNG’s media and information environment. China is also deeply involved in PNG’s ICT infrastructure, with Exim Bank of China having funded broadband and submarine cable projects, among others, as shown in Table 23. In Table 24, we list PNG’s media outlets.

Spotlight: PRC media accuse Australia of hindering PNG vaccine rollout

In the summer of 2021, a series of English-language articles published by PRC state-run media accused Australia of blocking China’s vaccine aid to PNG. The reports alleged that “consultants” sent by Canberra to Port Moresby worked to delay PNG’s authorization of and access to Chinese vaccines.

Table 23. China’s activities in PNG’s media and information environment

Type of Activity	Evidence
Chinese state-run media availability and presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCTV-4 is aired in PNG.⁵⁰⁶
State-level bilateral media cooperation agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the Joint Statement of the Third China-PIC Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in May 2025, the PRC and participating countries (including PNG) agreed to expand cooperation and exchanges in media.⁵⁰⁷ Details regarding this proposed cooperation are not available. • During a 2022 meeting between PRC Foreign Minister Wang Yi and PNG Foreign Minister Eoe, China and PNG reportedly agreed to deepen cooperation in communications.⁵⁰⁸ • In 2023, PNG and China released a joint statement pledging that the two countries would enhance cooperation in media, as well as in other fields.⁵⁰⁹ • During a 2024 meeting with PNG Foreign Minister Justin Tkachenko, Wang Yi stated that China was willing to cooperate with PNG on ICT.⁵¹⁰ • The specifics of these agreements are not publicly available.

Type of Activity	Evidence
Content sharing and coproduction among Chinese state-run media and local media entities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCTV has provided PNG’s National Broadcasting Corporation with content.⁵¹¹ • The Guangdong provincial government aired a television program called “China Theatre” (中国剧场) in PNG, as well as other countries.⁵¹²
Embassy engagement with local media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PRC ambassador to PNG has published articles in and accepted interviews from several PNG news outlets.⁵¹³ • In 2023, the PRC ambassador, the general manager of the PNG National Broadcasting Corporation, and the PNG minister for ICT discussed promoting cooperation in radio, television, and telecommunications technology.⁵¹⁴ • The PRC Embassy in PNG has held media briefings for local media outlets.⁵¹⁵
Offers of funding or equipment to media outlets and organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The University of Papua New Guinea’s Journalism and Public Relations program has received funding for new infrastructure from China.⁵¹⁶ Details about the funding and how it was used are not publicly available.
PRC government-sponsored media trips to China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2017, the PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the State Council Information Office hosted journalists from PNG, Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, and the FSM for a weeklong tour of China.⁵¹⁷ • In 2023, journalists from PNG, Fiji, Kiribati, and Vanuatu participated in a four-month exchange program in China organized by the China International Press Communication Center.⁵¹⁸ • In 2024, journalists from Vanuatu, PNG, and Fiji participated in a trip to China organized by the China International Press Communication Center and the China Public Diplomacy Association.⁵¹⁹
Efforts to limit access of non-PRC media outlets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In October 2018, PRC embassy staff in PNG reportedly removed personnel from ABC and a local PNG outlet who were trying to film the arrival of PRC Foreign Minister Wang Yi at the PNG airport. The outlets had been invited to film the event.⁵²⁰ • In November 2018, Xi Jinping attended a forum in Port Moresby with eight PIC leaders. In the lead-up to the meeting, Chinese officials denied entry to Pacific media outlets that had been invited to cover the event and had registered with the PNG government. Chinese media outlets were permitted entry. In addition, at a ceremony during Xi’s visit to PNG, only China’s CCTV was allowed to record the event.⁵²¹

Type of Activity	Evidence
Constructing, operating, and financing local ICT infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PNG has an MOU on cooperation in the ICT sector with China.⁵²² • Huawei operates in PNG.⁵²³ • Exim Bank of China funded the Kumul Domestic Submarine Cable System to PNG. The cable was installed by Huawei Marine, which is now known as HMN Tech, Ltd.⁵²⁴ • During a 2023 meeting, the PNG minister for information and communications technology and the PRC ambassador discussed promoting cooperation in radio, television, and telecommunications technology. Details of the discussion are not publicly available.⁵²⁵ • China is supporting PNG’s Digital Transformation Project with concessional loans and appears to have provided PNG’s National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) with a “television outside broadcast van” and the Lae Medium Wave station.⁵²⁶ • In 2014, Exim Bank provided a US\$173.2 million preferential buyer’s credit to PNG to upgrade its national broadband network by establishing 3G and 4G networks and expanding the country’s tower infrastructure. PNG signed a deal with Huawei to execute the project. As of 2021, the project had been put on hold, and its status is unclear at the time of writing.⁵²⁷ • The China State Construction Engineering Corporation constructed NBC’s new digital television facility. The project was funded through a US\$69 million concessional loan from Exim Bank of China that was approved by the PRC government between 2021 and 2022. Officials from the PRC embassy in PNG and NBC personnel held a “handover” ceremony in June 2024.⁵²⁸ The construction of the facility is part of a larger project funded by Exim Bank to upgrade PNG’s TV system from analog signal to digital.⁵²⁹

Source: CNA.

Local media outlets

Table 24. PNG media outlets

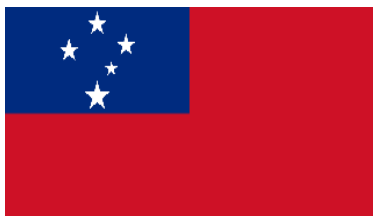
Outlet	Type of Media	Description	Ownership
Click Pacific	TV, free-to-air and paid	Broadcasts direct-to-home TV; ⁵³⁰ PNG TV is the local channel	Richard Broadbridge ⁵³¹

Outlet	Type of Media	Description	Ownership
EM-TV (https://emtv.com.pg/)	TV, free-to-air	News and entertainment programs, with content pulled from Australian TV stations and Pasifika TV ⁵³²	State-owned (Telikom PNG, through a subsidiary, Media Niugini Limited) ⁵³³
FM100 (https://fm100.com.pg/)	Radio	Information and music; considered “more modern” than that played on National Broadcasting Corporation ⁵³⁴	Kalang Advertising Ltd., a subsidiary Telikom PNG ⁵³⁵
NBC (https://nbc.com.pg/)	TV, free-to-air	As PNG’s largest state-owned media organization, provides local and government content ⁵³⁶	State-owned (NBC) ⁵³⁷
Nau FM, Yumi FM, Legend FM (https://naufm.net/ ; https://yumifm.net/ ; https://legendfm.net/)	Radio	Music and entertainment ⁵³⁸	PNG FM, a subsidiary of Communications Fiji Ltd. ⁵³⁹
NBC Radio (https://nbc.com.pg/)	Radio	Via provincial stations, broadcasts local and national news; also airs hourly national news programs and other current affairs content ⁵⁴⁰	State-owned (NBC) ⁵⁴¹
PNG Attitude (https://www.pngattitude.com/)	News blog	Forum in which people interested in PNG-Australia relations and domestic issues in PNG can share stories, ideas, and opinions	Keith Jackson ⁵⁴²
PNG Facts: The Niugini Voice (https://www.pngfacts.com/)	News blog	Domestic and regional news; includes some jobs and classified listings ⁵⁴³	Owner unknown; website hosted by Kilikalotech, a PNG web design business ⁵⁴⁴
<i>Post-Courier</i> (https://postcourier.com.pg/)	Newspaper	English-language domestic news and editorials ⁵⁴⁵	Allied Press; Rupert Murdoch’s News Corp. a majority shareholder ⁵⁴⁶
Radio Australia (https://www.abc.net.au/radio-australia/)	Radio	Domestic, regional, and international news, sports, and business ⁵⁴⁷	State-owned (ABC)

Outlet	Type of Media	Description	Ownership
RNZ Pacific (https://www.rnz.co.nz/)	Radio	Regional news and sports ⁵⁴⁸	State-owned (RNZ) ⁵⁴⁹
<i>The National</i> (https://www.thenational.com.pg/)	Newspaper	English-language domestic news	Rimbunan Hijau (PNG) Group, multi-industry Malaysian company run by founder and CEO Tiong Hiew King ⁵⁵⁰
TVWAN (Television Wan) (https://tvwan.com.pg/)	TV, free-to-air and paid ⁵⁵¹	PNG's first digital free-to-view TV channel; broadcasts local and international content ⁵⁵²	Digicel ⁵⁵³
<i>Wantok Niuspepa</i> (https://wantokniuspepa.com/)	Newspaper	Only newspaper publishing local stories in Tok Pisin; seeks to promote "Christian values, human rights, and civil society"	Word Publishing Company Ltd. ⁵⁵⁴

Source: CNA.

Samoa



- Total population (2024): 208, 853⁵⁵⁵
- Official languages: Samoan (Polynesian) and English⁵⁵⁶
- Literacy rate (2021): 99.1 percent⁵⁵⁷
- Internet penetration (2021): 78 percent⁵⁵⁸
- Mobile phone subscriptions (per 100 people, 2022 est.): 60⁵⁵⁹

Regulations on media and information environment in Samoa. Samoa has a reputation of being a model for press freedom in the region, despite authoritarian pressures under a former administration.⁵⁶⁰ Freedom of speech and expression are officially protected in the Samoan constitution.⁵⁶¹ However, religious and cultural norms create pressure on journalists to limit or avoid discussion of certain topics such as such as gender violence, gay rights, and abortion.⁵⁶²

Regulations on foreign actors in Samoa’s media and information environment. Non-Samoan actors face few barriers to entering the media or telecommunications sectors.⁵⁶³ Although all foreign investors must hold registration certificates, both media and telecommunications sectors are open to foreign investment.⁵⁶⁴

PRC presence in Samoa’s media and information environment. There are multiple examples of PRC involvement in Samoa’s media and information environment, including content sharing with Samoan media outlets and embassy engagement with local outlets. See Table 25 for a list of China’s involvements in Samoan media; Table 26 lists Samoa’s media outlets.

Table 25. China’s activities in Samoa’s media and information environment

Type of Activity	Evidence
Chinese state-run media availability and presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• China Radio International broadcasts in Samoa.⁵⁶⁵• CGTN is available through Sky Pacific.⁵⁶⁶

Type of Activity	Evidence
State-level bilateral media cooperation agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the Joint Statement of the Third China-PIC Foreign Ministers' Meeting in May 2025, the PRC and participating countries (including Samoa) agreed to expand cooperation and exchanges in media.⁵⁶⁷ Details regarding this proposed cooperation are not available. • In November 2024, the PRC and Samoa released a joint statement announcing that the two countries had agreed to expand people-to-people exchanges and cooperation in media, as well as other areas.⁵⁶⁸ At the time of writing, the terms of the agreement have not been made public.
Content sharing and coproduction among Chinese state-run media and local media outlets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to a press release from the PRC Embassy in Samoa, a Samoan television station broadcasts Chinese news programs and has long had a relationship with CCTV and CGTN.⁵⁶⁹ • CGTN hosts content on its website that appears to have been produced by a news outlet owned by the Samoan government.⁵⁷⁰
Embassy engagement with local media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PRC ambassador to Samoa has published articles in and accepted interviews with several Samoan news outlets.⁵⁷¹ • In 2020, the PRC ambassador to Samoa attended and delivered the keynote address at the award ceremony for a local newspaper's short story competition.⁵⁷² • The PRC ambassador has also met with the head of a major Samoan broadcaster.⁵⁷³
PRC government-sponsored media trips to China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2017, the PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the State Council Information Office hosted journalists from PNG, Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, and the FSM for a weeklong tour of China.⁵⁷⁴ • In May 2025, a media practitioner from Samoa participated in a seminar in China organized by the CCP Central Committee's International Department.⁵⁷⁵
Constructing, operating, and/or financing local ICT infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2012, Exim Bank of China provided a US\$25.31 million concessional loan for Samoa's National Broadband Highway Project, which sought to establish high-speed broadband connections for all government ministries and corporations, such as schools, hospitals, and emergency services. Huawei implemented the project, which was completed in June 2024.⁵⁷⁶

Source: CNA.

Local media outlets

Table 26. Samoa media outlets

Outlet	Type of Media	Description	Ownership
2AP Apia	Radio	Public broadcaster	Owned and operated by Samoa Ministry of Communications and Information Technology ⁵⁷⁷
TV9 (https://mcit.gov.ws/programs/broadcasting/)	TV	Public broadcaster; provides the same service as 2AP ⁵⁷⁸	Owned and operated by the Samoa Ministry of Communications and Information Technology ⁵⁷⁹
BlueSky Moana TV (https://www.bluesky.as/personal/moana-tv/)	TV, paid	Paid TV with basic and premium plans, both of which feature a number of foreign channels ⁵⁸⁰	Shaw, a Canadian communications firm ⁵⁸¹
Magik FM	Radio	Rebroadcasts RNZ Pacific ⁵⁸²	Radio Polynesia Limited ⁵⁸³
Mai FM (https://www.maifm.co.nz/home.html)	Radio	Rebroadcasts RNZ Pacific ⁵⁸⁴	Samoa Quality Broadcasters ⁵⁸⁵
<i>Newsline</i> (https://newslineamoa.com/)	Newspaper	Publishes three days per week in English ⁵⁸⁶	Domestically owned by Mataliga Pio Siao ⁵⁸⁷
<i>Samoa Observer</i> (https://www.samoaoobserver.ws/)	Newspaper	Only daily newspaper in the country; also has the highest newspaper circulation in Samoa ⁵⁸⁸	Editor-in-chief Savea Sano Malifa and publisher Muliagatele Jean Malifa (both Samoan) ⁵⁸⁹
<i>Samoa Times</i> (https://www.samoatimes.co.nz/)	Newspaper	Publishes weekly in Samoan; also circulated in New Zealand and Australia ⁵⁹⁰	New Zealand-based Samoa Multimedia Group ⁵⁹¹

Outlet	Type of Media	Description	Ownership
Savali News (https://www.savalinews.com/)	Newspaper	Government newspaper that publishes two editions: a weekly bilingual newspaper in English and Samoan, and a monthly Samoan-language gazette called <i>Savali Samoa</i> ; oldest newspaper in Samoa ⁵⁹²	Ministry of the Prime Minister and Cabinet ⁵⁹³
Sky Pacific (http://www.skypacific.tv/index.jsp)	TV, paid	Offers more than 25 foreign television channels, including CGTN, to subscribers ⁵⁹⁴	Owned by Digicel Pacific
Talofa FM	Radio	Rebroadcasts RNZ Pacific ⁵⁹⁵	Owned by Radio Polynesia Limited ⁵⁹⁶
TV1 (https://tv1samoa.tv/)	TV	Broadcasts programming produced in China, Australia, and New Zealand ⁵⁹⁷	Owned by Samoa Quality Broadcasting Ltd. ⁵⁹⁸
TV3	TV	Rebroadcasts news produced by New Zealand's public broadcaster ⁵⁹⁹	Acquired by Maposua Corey Keil and Nicholas Caffarelli in 2018; Maposua Corey Keil also owns Radio Polynesia Ltd ⁶⁰⁰
Samoa Global News (https://samoaglobalnews.com/)	News website	Covers global, regional, and local news in both English and Samoan ⁶⁰¹	Unclear

Source: CNA.

Solomon Islands



- Total population (2024): 726,799⁶⁰²
- Official languages: Pijin (Pijin) and English⁶⁰³
- Literacy rate (2009): 84.1 percent⁶⁰⁴
- Internet penetration (2021): 36 percent⁶⁰⁵
- Mobile phone subscriptions (per 100 people, 2021 est.): 67⁶⁰⁶

Regulations on media and information environment in Solomon Islands. Solomon Islands' constitution grants freedom of expression, including for members of the press and other media, and the government generally respects this right.⁶⁰⁷ However, the government has periodically sought to shape media narratives in a politically favorable manner. Defamation is a criminal offense, and authorities have filed or threatened to file charges or civil suits against the media. Regulations on offensive content also reportedly result in some self-censorship in the media.⁶⁰⁸ In August 2022, the Solomon Islands government took greater control of the Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation (SIBC) by vetting all stories before publication to protect citizens from “lies and misinformation.” Eight days later, the government backtracked its decision and stated there would be no censorship but urged the SIBC editorial team to “balance” their stories.⁶⁰⁹

Regulations on foreign actors in Solomon Islands' media and information environment. Solomon Islands welcomes foreign investment in its information environment. The National Broadcasting Policy (2015) suggested that foreign investment would be largely beneficial:

The Solomon Islands Government considers that the quality and content of broadcasting...is not threatened at the present time by foreign ownership....The Government considers that, for the foreseeable future, the benefits that are likely to flow from increased foreign investment in the broadcasting sector are likely to outweigh the detriments.⁶¹⁰

The policy also stated that the government “does not wish to dictate what content broadcasters should transmit” but that it “[will] seek to facilitate the production of local content.”⁶¹¹ In addition, the government is responsible for managing television and radio licensing.⁶¹²

Spotlight: PRC efforts to influence discourse in Solomon Islands

The PRC has attempted to directly shape discourse in Solomon Islands on several instances, including the following:

2021 Honiara riots. Following the outbreak of riots in November 2021 in Solomon Islands' capital city of Honiara, English-language reporting published by Chinese state-run media and statements from PRC officials blamed the US, Taiwan, and Australia for instigating the riots, as detailed in a study conducted by ASPI.⁶¹³ A local Solomon Island newspaper also published content claiming that Taiwan had incited the riots.⁶¹⁴

2022 leaked security agreement. In March 2022, a draft security agreement between the PRC and Solomon Islands was leaked on social media. The draft, which included provisions that would allow the PRC to station its forces on Solomon Islands, caused serious concern in Washington and Canberra. As ASPI demonstrates, in the aftermath of the leak, a flurry of English-language articles in PRC state-run media cast the United States and Australia as bullies who sought to smear China's reputation in the region.⁶¹⁵

2024 election. In the lead-up to Solomon Islands' April 2024 national and provincial elections, PRC state-run reporting amplified Russian state-run media that baselessly accused the United States of plotting an electoral coup in Honiara. China's *Global Times*, for instance, published six articles making such accusations in the lead-up to election day.⁶¹⁶ The US ambassador to PNG, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu denied the allegations.⁶¹⁷

PRC presence in Solomon Islands' media and information environment. Although China and Solomon Islands only established diplomatic relations in 2019, examples of PRC activities in Solomon Islands' media environment are numerous. These examples include bilateral statements that reference media cooperation, MOUs on cooperation between Chinese and Solomon Islands outlets, and provision of funds for local outlets, as demonstrated in Table 27. We list the media outlets in Solomon Islands in Table 28.

Table 27. China's activities in Solomon Islands' media and information environment

Type of Activity	Evidence
Chinese state-run media availability and presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">CGTN is available in Solomon Islands through Solomon Telekom.⁶¹⁸

Type of Activity	Evidence
State-level bilateral media cooperation agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the Joint Statement of the Third China-PIC Foreign Ministers' Meeting in May 2025, the PRC and participating countries (including Solomon Islands) agreed to expand cooperation and exchanges in media.⁶¹⁹ Details regarding this proposed cooperation are not available. • In a 2024 joint statement released by China and Solomon Islands, the two countries agreed to broaden cooperation in media, as well as in other fields.⁶²⁰ • A 2023 joint statement between the two countries also made a reference to media cooperation.⁶²¹ • The details of these two agreements are not publicly available.
Content sharing and coproduction among Chinese state-run media and local media outlets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During Prime Minister Jeremiah Manele's July 2024 visit to China, 13 MOUs were signed between Solomon Islands and the People's Republic of China. These included two media cooperation MOUs intended to do two things: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Establish a cooperation framework between China's official Xinhua News Agency and Solomon Islands' Government Communication Unit within the Office of Prime Minister and Cabinet for collaboration in news and information. ○ Facilitate content exchange, coproduction, internships, training, and technological cooperation between the China Media Group and the SIBC.⁶²² • Guangdong's provincial government codeveloped a special TV program called "China Jiangmen City–Solomon Islands Honiara City 2021 Special Spring Festival Program" with unnamed partners in Solomon Islands.⁶²³

Type of Activity	Evidence
<p>PRC government-sponsored media trips to China</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PRC government has sponsored trips by journalists from Solomon Islands to visit China.⁶²⁴ • According to one Solomon Islands media professional, China offered local reporters a press tour of China shortly after the two countries established diplomatic relations in 2019. Two more major group trips to China reportedly occurred, and a few other journalists allegedly went on individual trips.⁶²⁵ • These PRC-sponsored trips resulted in positive press for China. For instance, a journalist from the <i>Solomon Star</i> who attended three PRC-funded study tours between 2010 and 2024 lauded the 2024 Belt and Road Journalists' Forum as "a significant step" in his career, praised the state of investigative journalism in China, and described PRC journalists as countering "misinformation spread by Western media."⁶²⁶ • In June 2025, six journalists from five media outlets in Tonga, Fiji, Vanuatu, Nauru, and Solomon Islands participated in an exchange program in Beijing for international journalists coordinated by the China International Press Communication Center. During the program, the PIC journalists met with the Director of the Pacific Island Division within the PRC's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁶²⁷
<p>Pressure to censor or publish specific content</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the investigative journalism website In-Depth Solomons, a diplomat from the PRC embassy in Honiara called the owner of a local newspaper in January 2024 with "concerns" after the newspaper republished an article from ABC about Taiwan's presidential election. In a subsequent email to the paper's editorial staff, the owner stated that "China is also a supporter" of the paper and asked the staff to be "cautious of the news we publish especially with regards to Taiwan's election."⁶²⁸ • The Chinese embassy also sent the same newspaper and other major news outlets in Solomon Islands an email asking for their cooperation in covering Taiwan's election and requesting that they publish two articles about the election written by the PRC State Council Taiwan Affairs Office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁶²⁹

Type of Activity	Evidence
Embassy engagement with local media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The head of a Solomon Islands newspaper was hosted by the PRC embassy and later by the PRC ambassador.⁶³⁰ • In 2021, the PRC ambassador visited a local newspaper’s office and met with the outlet’s leadership, editors, and journalists.⁶³¹ • Also in 2021, the Chinese embassy hosted a video conference between journalists from Guangdong and journalists from Solomon Islands. During the conference, the PRC ambassador encouraged participants to strengthen cooperation among the media outlets present in information exchange, capacity building, and personnel training.⁶³² • Officials at the PRC embassy have published articles in local outlets.⁶³³ During a discussion with CNA, a reporter in Solomon Islands indicated that they believed that the Chinese embassy was paying for local papers to publish articles about Chinese activities every two weeks.⁶³⁴ • In 2021, the PRC ambassador delivered a speech in Pijin over the SIBC’s radio to celebrate the anniversaries of the founding of the PRC and the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Solomon Islands.⁶³⁵ • Officials at the PRC embassy have accepted interviews by Solomon Islands media outlets and fielded questions from local reporters.⁶³⁶ • Other Chinese officials in Solomon Islands have also been interviewed by local media outlets.⁶³⁷
Offers of funding or equipment to media outlets and organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In July 2022, the PRC government gave a local media outlet funding to upgrade aging equipment. The proposal submitted by the outlet to the PRC embassy requested 1,150,000 Solomon Islands dollars (US\$206,300), stating that the aging equipment was “curtailing news flow about China’s generous and lightning economic and infrastructure development in Solomon Islands.”⁶³⁸ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ During a discussion with CNA, an Australian journalist indicated that the PRC embassy disbursed this funding in exchange for positive coverage.⁶³⁹ • Also in 2022, the PRC embassy reportedly gave another local outlet US\$27,400 in cash. The embassy had given the same outlet nearly US\$12,000 worth of equipment, including computers, in 2019.⁶⁴⁰
Constructing, operating, and financing local ICT infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China loaned Solomon Islands US\$66 million to build 161 mobile communication towers, to be supplied and built by Huawei and China Harbor Engineering Company. Construction began in 2023, and the first tower was launched in 2024.⁶⁴¹

Source: CNA.

Local media outlets

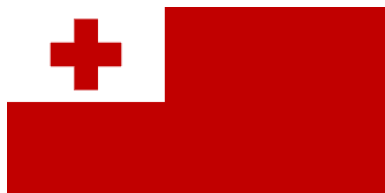
Table 28. Solomon Islands media outlets

Outlet	Type of Media	Description	Ownership
<i>Island Sun</i> (https://theislandsun.com.sb/)	Newspaper	Local and international news; published Monday through Saturday ⁶⁴²	Privately owned by Mathias Loji ⁶⁴³
Isles Media Group (https://islesmedia.net/)	Newspapers	Publishes newspapers including <i>Sunday Isles</i> , <i>Solomon Women Newspaper</i> , and <i>Raw Sports Newspaper</i> ⁶⁴⁴	Privately owned by Lynda Wate, a Solomon Islands national living in Australia ⁶⁴⁵
SATSOL (https://satsol.net/)	TV, paid ⁶⁴⁶	35 channels, including BBC World News and CNN; some local content ⁶⁴⁷	Local company founded by CEO Tony Ferris, a Solomon Islands national ⁶⁴⁸
Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation (https://www.sibconline.com.sb/)	Radio	Operates Radio Happy Isles, Wantok FM, Radio Happy Lagoon, and Radio Temotu; ⁶⁴⁹ broadcasts in English and Solomon Islands Pijin ⁶⁵⁰	Government of Solomon Islands ⁶⁵¹
<i>Solomon Star</i> (https://www.solomonstarnews.com/)	Newspaper	Published daily in English; covers national and regional news and sports; ⁶⁵² has received funding from the PRC Embassy ⁶⁵³	Privately owned by the family of the late journalist John Lamani ⁶⁵⁴
Solomon Telekom (https://www.ourtelekom.com.sb/)	Television, free-to-air ⁶⁵⁵	ABC Australia, Al Jazeera, BBC World, China Global Television, DW (Germany), France 24, and NHK are available 24/7 ⁶⁵⁶	Solomon Islands National Provident Fund and the Investment Corporation Solomon Islands ⁶⁵⁷
<i>Solomon Times</i> (https://www.solomontimes.com/)	News website	Online English news portal; includes op-eds from former foreign diplomats and Transparency International	Funding and ownership sources not disclosed ⁶⁵⁸

Outlet	Type of Media	Description	Ownership
Trinity Broadcasting Network (https://www.tbn.org/)	Television, free-to-air ⁶⁵⁹	Describes itself as world's largest Christian broadcaster ⁶⁶⁰	Trinity Christian Center of Santa Ana, Inc., a California religious nonprofit corporation ⁶⁶¹
In-Depth Solomons (https://indepthsolomons.com.sb/)	News website	Online news portal dedicated to in-depth investigative journalism on Solomon Islands	Co-owned by Georgina Maka'a and Ofani Eremae ⁶⁶²
Tavuli News (https://www.tavulinews.com.sb/)	News website	The sole local TV news station in Solomon Islands; covers national, regional, and global news ⁶⁶³	Solomon Islands Local Media Agency Co. Ltd. ⁶⁶⁴
Solomon Business Magazine Online (https://sbm.sb/)	News website	Monthly magazine focused on business news and developments in Solomon Islands ⁶⁶⁵	Local company owned and founded by Robert Luke Iroga ⁶⁶⁶
Paoa FM (https://www.facebook.com/Paoafm/)	Radio	Largest FM radio station in Solomon Islands; broadcasts to two-thirds of the country's population and features music and local news ⁶⁶⁷	Co-owned by Elizabeth Siota and Joel Lamani ⁶⁶⁸
Melanesian News Network (https://www.facebook.com/677MNN/)	Social media/news website	Facebook page that covers local and regional news ⁶⁶⁹	Founded by Dorothy Wickham ⁶⁷⁰

Source: CNA.

Tonga



- Total population (2024 est.): 104,889⁶⁷¹
- Official languages: Tongan and English⁶⁷²
- Literacy rate (2021): 99.4 percent⁶⁷³
- Internet penetration (2021 est.): 67 percent⁶⁷⁴
- Mobile phone subscriptions (per 100 people, 2021 est.): 61⁶⁷⁵

Regulations on media and information environment in Tonga. Although the country’s constitution provides for the protection of speech and press freedoms, there is a history of friction between the government and the media. The Tongan constitution holds that “it shall be lawful for all people to speak, write, and print their opinions[,] and no law shall ever be enacted to restrict this liberty.” It caveats, however, that “nothing in this clause shall be held to outweigh the law of slander or the laws for the protection of the King and the Royal Family.”⁶⁷⁶ Government officials have also brought—and won—defamation suits against media outlets critical of them.⁶⁷⁷ In 2017, then-Prime Minister ‘Akilisi Pōhiva described the state’s public broadcaster as “an enemy of the government,” fired some of its leadership, and asserted that the main role of the media “is to facilitate the work of the government.”⁶⁷⁸ According to Reporters Without Borders (RSF), Tongan journalists had “high hopes” that the election of Tongan Prime Minister Siaosi ‘Ofakivahafolau Sovaleni in December 2021 would bring about greater journalistic freedoms. However, RSF noted this year that “increasing interference” by the current king has diminished these expectations.⁶⁷⁹

Regulations on foreign actors in Tonga’s media and information environment. Although the Tonga Media Operators Act (2003) prohibits the issuance of media licenses to foreigners or their representatives, it is relatively easy to acquire Tongan citizenship through passport and citizenship sales.⁶⁸⁰ Tonga has long been regarded as a “Pacific Island tax haven” that sells passports and citizenship to foreign nationals with few naturalization requirements.⁶⁸¹ A 2018 crackdown on the sale of Tongan passports led to the arrest of former Prime Minister Lord Tu’ivakano in connection with the sale of passports to Chinese citizens.⁶⁸²

PRC presence in Tonga’s media and information environment. Many examples of PRC media presence in Tonga exist, including content sharing and coproduction among Chinese and Tongan outlets, PRC embassy efforts to engage with Tongan media, and the PRC directly providing funds to Tonga. See Table 29 for a list of China’s activities in Tonga’s media and Table 30 for a list of Tongan media outlets.

Table 29. China’s activities in Tonga’s media and information environment

Type of Activity	Evidence
State-level bilateral media cooperation agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to the Joint Statement of the Third China-PIC Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in May 2025, the PRC and participating countries (including Tonga) agreed to expand cooperation and exchanges in media.⁶⁸³ Details regarding this proposed cooperation are not available.
Chinese state-run media availability and presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> China Radio International has a radio station in Tonga.⁶⁸⁴ CGTN and CCTV-4 are available in Tonga through Sky Pacific and Digicel TV.⁶⁸⁵
Content sharing and coproduction among Chinese state-run media and local media outlets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2024, the Tonga Broadcasting Commission (TBC) and other regional media outlets collaborated with CGTN to produce a special program titled “Navigating Future Horizons: A China-Pacific Island Countries Dialogue.”⁶⁸⁶ The TBC also airs CCTV news and entertainment programs for free.⁶⁸⁷
Embassy engagement with local media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The PRC ambassador has published articles on a Tongan news website.⁶⁸⁸ The PRC embassy has held media briefings for Tongan media outlets.⁶⁸⁹ The PRC ambassador has met with the leadership of various Tongan news outlets.⁶⁹⁰
Offers of PRC funding or equipment to media outlets and organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2019, the PRC embassy provided the TBC with an assistance grant for renovating a corridor of the TBC building.⁶⁹¹
Efforts by Chinese entities to invest in or purchase local media outlets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Tongan reporter interviewed by CNA asserted that a Chinese business had purchased a Tongan newspaper. The reporter did note that the change of government in Tonga could affect the purchase.⁶⁹² CNA has so far been unable to confirm that this transaction took place or that the media outlet is still in operation.
PRC government-sponsored media trips to China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2017, the PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the State Council Information Office hosted journalists from PNG, Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, and the FSM for a weeklong tour of China.⁶⁹³ In June 2025, six journalists from five media outlets in Tonga, Fiji, Vanuatu, Nauru, and Solomon Islands participated in an exchange program in Beijing for international journalists coordinated by the China International Press Communication Center. During the program, the PIC journalists met with the director of the Pacific Island Division within the PRC’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁶⁹⁴

Type of Activity	Evidence
Constructing, operating, and financing local ICT infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to a 2022 article published by <i>China Daily</i>, Huawei has provided unspecified “technologies” to Tongan telecommunications facilities.⁶⁹⁵

Source: CNA

Local media outlets

Table 30. Tonga media outlets

Outlet	Type of Media	Description	Ownership
A3Z Radio Tonga 1	Radio	Rebroadcasts news produced by the BBC, ABC, and RNZ Pacific ⁶⁹⁶	State-owned (TBC)
DigicelTV (https://www.digicel.pacific.com/)	TV, paid	Standard plan carries ABC, Al Jazeera, and CCTV-4, among other channels ⁶⁹⁷	Owned by Digicel Pacific
Doulos Broadcasting (https://www.facebook.com/DoulosTVTonga/)	TV	Broadcasts Christian programming ⁶⁹⁸	Commissioned by the king of Tonga ⁶⁹⁹
Radio Nuku'alofa 88.6 FM (https://www.facebook.com/radionukualofa/)	Radio	Talk radio and local news and sports coverage in English and Tongan ⁷⁰⁰	Privately owned ⁷⁰¹
<i>Matangi Tonga</i> (https://matangitonga.to/)	News website	Popular independent news website; has republished foreign content, including “sponsored” articles from Chinese government officials ⁷⁰²	Owned by Vava’u Press, a publishing company directed by Pesi Fonua and Mary Lyn Fonua ⁷⁰³
Radio Tonga—Vava’u Kool FM	Radio	Rebroadcasts news produced by RNZ Pacific ⁷⁰⁴	State-owned (TBC, as of 2019) ⁷⁰⁵
Sky Pacific (http://www.skypacific.tv/)	TV, paid	Offers more than 25 foreign television channels, including CGTN, to subscribers ⁷⁰⁶	Owned by Digicel Pacific

Outlet	Type of Media	Description	Ownership
<i>Talanoa 'o Tonga</i> (<i>Stories of Tonga</i>) (https://talanoaotonga.to/about/)	News website	Covers stories of “national importance” to Tonga and “specializes in investigative journalism”; ⁷⁰⁷ has also published articles written by the PRC ambassador to Tonga ⁷⁰⁸	Founded by Kalafi Moala, former owner of Taimi Media Network ⁷⁰⁹
<i>Talaki</i> (https://www.facebook.com/Vula.news/)	Newspaper	Published weekly ⁷¹⁰	Owned by Vula News Company, which is owned by Filokalafi 'Akau'ola, the paper's editor and publisher ⁷¹¹
Television Tonga	TV, free-to-air	Rebroadcasts content from Australian and New Zealand state-sponsored media outlets and has coproduced media with CGTN ⁷¹²	State-owned (TBC) ⁷¹³
Tonga Independent (https://tongaindependent.com/)	News website	A “progressive journal” reporting on political, economic, and social development in Tonga and abroad in both English and Tongan ⁷¹⁴	Unclear as of January 2025; edited by Tonga Fonua and Tu'ifua Vailena ⁷¹⁵
Kaniva Tonga (https://kanivatonga.co.nz/)	News website	Established in New Zealand in 2009 by Kalino Latu to serve Tongans in the diaspora and the kingdom; provides content in English and Tongan ⁷¹⁶	Operates as part of the Ta'angafonua Trust, which aims to strengthen and preserve Tongan culture, heritage, and culture ⁷¹⁷

Source: CNA.

Vanuatu



- Total population (2024): 318,007⁷¹⁸
- Official languages: Bislama, English, and French; also has more than 100 unofficial local languages⁷¹⁹
- Literacy rate (2021): 89.1 percent⁷²⁰
- Internet penetration (2021): 66 percent⁷²¹
- Mobile phone subscriptions (per 100 people, 2022 est.): 78⁷²²

Regulations on media and information environment in Vanuatu. Vanuatu's constitution protects the media's independence, and the government generally respects this freedom.⁷²³ However, elected officials have reportedly threatened journalists for publishing content deemed critical or unfavorable in recent years. In addition, in 2021, the government passed a law criminalizing threatening language, libel, and slander, leading some to worry about possible ramifications on the press.⁷²⁴

More recently, in March 2025, Vanuatu's prime minister released a signed statement critical of an ABC report that showed damage to China-constructed buildings wrought by the devastating December 2024 earthquake and quoted sources questioning whether the construction of some buildings may have bypassed Vanuatu's building code.⁷²⁵ The prime minister accused ABC of bias and asserted that the story constituted foreign interference. In response, the International Federation of Journalists called on the government to respect the independence of local and international news media.⁷²⁶

Regulations on foreign actors in Vanuatu's media and information environment. The Vanuatu Broadcasting Guidelines (2008) indicate that 70 percent of shareholders of a broadcasting entity must be Vanuatu citizens.⁷²⁷ According to the Newspapers (Restriction on Publication) Act of 1982, noncitizens and foreign corporations are prohibited from owning or publishing newspapers unless they receive government approval.⁷²⁸ Despite regulations that intend to restrict foreign media ownership, Vanuatu has relatively lax requirements for naturalization. Foreigners can obtain Vanuatu citizenship by investing around US\$160,000 in Vanuatu.⁷²⁹ Indeed, passport sales are a source of government revenue, accounting for one-third of total government revenue in 2018.⁷³⁰ In 2019, Vanuatu rejected a work-permit renewal request for a Canadian journalist, who claimed that his request was denied because his newspaper had covered Chinese influence in Vanuatu.⁷³¹

PRC presence in Vanuatu's media and information environment. In addition to typical PRC embassy engagement activities in Vanuatu, Chinese state-owned media is available in Vanuatu, and Chinese media outlets have entered into cooperation agreements with Vanuatu outlets.⁷³²

See Table 31 for a collection of China’s media activities in Vanuatu and Table 32 or a list of Vanuatu media outlets.

Table 31. China’s activities in Vanuatu’s media and information environment

Type of Activity	Evidence
State-level bilateral media cooperation agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to the Joint Statement of the Third China-PIC Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in May 2025, the PRC and participating countries (including Vanuatu) agreed to expand cooperation and exchanges in media.⁷³³ Details regarding this proposed cooperation are not available.
Chinese state-run media availability and presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CCTV and China Radio International are available in Vanuatu.⁷³⁴
Content sharing and coproduction among Chinese state-run media and local media outlets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2024, CMG and the Vanuatu Broadcasting and Television Corporation (VBTC) signed a memorandum of cooperation. According to the CMG release about the memorandum, CMG and VBTC have agreed to establish a regular mechanism for cooperation in news information exchange, program joint production, personnel exchanges, and technical exchanges.⁷³⁵ VBTC established a joint venture with a Chinese company to provide digital television in 2015; by 2018, however, the joint venture had collapsed.⁷³⁶ In 2023, VBTC broadcast a speech by PRC Minister of Foreign Affairs Qin Gang commemorating the 41st anniversary of the establishment of China-Vanuatu relations.⁷³⁷ The Guangdong provincial government has offered a television program called “China Theatre” (中国剧场) in Vanuatu, among other countries in the region.⁷³⁸
Embassy engagement with local media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The PRC ambassador has published articles and been interviewed by the <i>Daily Post</i>.⁷³⁹ In 2022, the PRC ambassador and Vanuatu’s foreign minister jointly published an article in the <i>Daily Post</i> to celebrate the anniversary of the establishment of China-Vanuatu relations.⁷⁴⁰ The PRC ambassador and embassy representatives frequently engage members of the local media.⁷⁴¹

Type of Activity	Evidence
PRC government-sponsored media trips to China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2023, journalists from PNG, Fiji, Kiribati, and Vanuatu participated in a four-month exchange program in China organized by the China International Press Communication Center.⁷⁴² In 2024, journalists from Vanuatu, PNG, and Fiji participated in a trip to China organized by the China International Press Communication Center and the China Public Diplomacy Association.⁷⁴³ In June 2025, six journalists from five media outlets in Tonga, Fiji, Vanuatu, Nauru, and Solomon Islands participated in an exchange program in Beijing for international journalists coordinated by the China International Press Communication Center. During the program, the PIC journalists met with the director of the Pacific Island Division within the PRC's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁷⁴⁴
Involvement in the construction, operations, and financing of local ICT infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Huawei provided Vanuatu with a digital surveillance system for its capital city, Port Vila.⁷⁴⁵
Offers of funding or equipment to media outlets and organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A July 31, 2025, article from Vanuatu's <i>Daily Post</i> reported that China's GX Foundation—described as an NGO that is chaired by a CCP official and engaged in carrying out Belt and Road Initiative programs—donated “video and film equipment aimed at enhancing storytelling and public communication.”⁷⁴⁶

Source: CNA.

Local media outlets

Table 32. Vanuatu media outlets

Outlet	Type of Media	Description	Ownership
Sky Pacific (http://www.skypacific.tv/)	TV, paid	Offers more than 25 foreign television channels, including CGTN, to subscribers ⁷⁴⁷	Owned by Digicel Pacific, which was acquired by Australian telecommunications company Telstra in a deal partially financed through Australian, Japanese, and US government support ⁷⁴⁸

Outlet	Type of Media	Description	Ownership
Telsat Pacific	TV, paid	Regional and international news channels including BBC World News, CNBC, and Sky News ⁷⁴⁹	Rod Smith, a dual Vanuatu and Australian citizen ⁷⁵⁰
<i>Vanuatu Daily Post</i> (https://www.dailypost.vu/)	Newspaper	Publishes daily except on Sunday and Monday. Vanuatu's only newspaper, ⁷⁵¹ which champions media freedom, ⁷⁵² intermittently translates and prints some content from English into Chinese, including in an online version; ⁷⁵³ it has, on at least one occasion, published an article written by the PRC ambassador to Vanuatu, ⁷⁵⁴ and its reporters have participated in programs with the China International Press Communication Centre ⁷⁵⁵	Trading Post, Vanuatu's largest privately owned media company ⁷⁵⁶
96 Buzz FM (https://www.buzzfm.vu/)	Radio	Nightly news and talk radio programming, as well as local and regional news coverage ⁷⁵⁷	Trading Post, which also owns <i>Vanuatu Daily Post</i> ⁷⁵⁸
VBTC (https://vbtc.vu/)	Radio, TV (free-to-air)	Operates Television Blong Vanuatu and Radio Vanuatu ⁷⁵⁹	State-owned (Vanuatu) ⁷⁶⁰

Source: CNA.

Wallis and Futuna



- Total population (2023 est.): 15,929⁷⁶¹
- Official language: French⁷⁶²
- Literacy: Unavailable
- Internet penetration (2021 est.): 45.8 percent⁷⁶³
- Mobile phone subscriptions: data unavailable

Regulations on media and information environment in Wallis and Futuna. As with French Polynesia, Wallis and Futuna are governed under the French Constitution, which protects both the freedom of expression and the freedom of the press.⁷⁶⁴ These freedoms are generally respected by local governments in the French Territories. However, in 2002, then-King “Lavelua” Tomasi Kulimoetoke ordered the police to close the collectivity’s only weekly newspaper after it published an editorial on a royal scandal.⁷⁶⁵

Regulations on foreign actors in Wallis and Futuna’s media and information environment. Although Wallis and Futuna are governed by French national laws, the local government controls specific policies and legislation on foreign investment. There is limited available information regarding how Wallis and Futuna regulate foreign actors in the media and information and communications industries.

PRC presence in Wallis and Futuna’s media and information environment. No available information suggests that the PRC or Chinese actors maintain a presence in Wallis and Futuna’s media and information environment.

Local media outlets

CNA did not identify any local media outlets in Wallis and Futuna.

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Abbreviations

ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
ASPI	Australian Strategic Policy Institute
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BCN	Broadcasting Corporation of Niue
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CCTV	China Central Television
CGTN	China Global Television Network
CITV	Cook Islands Television
CMG	China Media Group
COFA	Compact of Free Association
CRI	China Radio International
FSM	Federated States of Micronesia
FSMTC	Federated States of Micronesia Telecommunications Corporation
ICT	Information and communications technology
MOI	Memorandum of understanding
NBC	(Papua New Guinea) National Broadcasting Corporation
NHK	Japan Broadcasting Corporation
PACMAS	Pacific Media Assistance Scheme
PIC	Pacific Island country
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PRC	People's Republic of China
RMI	Republic of the Marshall Islands
RNZ	Radio New Zealand
RSF	Reporters Without Borders
SIBC	Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation
SOE	State-owned enterprise
TBC	Tonga Broadcasting Commission
TVNZ	Television New Zealand
USP	University of the South Pacific
VBTC	Vanuatu Broadcasting and Television Corporation

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¹ See, for example, Heidi Holz with Anthony Miller, *China's Playbook for Shaping the Global Media Environment*, CNA, IRM-2020-U-024710-FINAL, Feb. 2020, <https://www.cna.org/reports/2020/02/IRM-2020-U-024710-Final.pdf>; Lauren Dickey, Erica Downs, Andrew Taffer, and Heidi Holz, *Mapping the Information Environment in the Pacific Island Countries: Disruptors, Deficits, and Decisions*, CNA, IRM-2019-U-019755-Final, Dec. 2019, <https://www.cna.org/reports/2019/12/IRM-2019-U-019755-Final.pdf>.

² Participants in the Fiji event included Stanley Simpson, director, Mai TV; Heidi Holz, CNA; Dr. Shailendra Singh, associate professor and head of journalism at USP; Genevieve Collins, CNA; and Nilesh Lal, executive director, Dialogue Fiji.

³ Participants included Prof. David Capie, director, Centre for Strategic Studies, Victoria University of Wellington; Heidi Holz, CNA; Genevieve Collins, CNA; Barbara Dreaver, Pacific correspondent, TVNZ; Sam Sachdeva, National Affairs editor, *Newsroom NZ*; and Anna Powles, associate professor in the Centre for Defence and Security Studies, Massey University.

⁴ “Vital Statistics and Population Estimates,” Cook Islands Statistics Office, Dec. 2024, <https://stats.gov.ck/vital-statistics-and-population-estimates/>. Note that the CIA World Factbook offers a much lower estimate of Cook Islands’ resident population, at 7,761. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), “Australia-Oceania: Cook Islands,” World Factbook, accessed Oct. 22, 2024, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/cook-islands/>.

⁵ “Cook Islands,” in *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, 21st ed., edited by Gary F. Simons and Charles D. Fenning (Dallas: SIL International, 2018), <http://www.ethnologue.com>.

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⁹ CIA, “Micronesia, Federated States of,” World Factbook, accessed Oct. 28, 2024, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/micronesia-federated-states-of>.

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¹⁷ CIA, “Australia-Oceania: Fiji.”

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