

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

15 September 2026

URGENT APPEAL: Help stop Wagina Island being destroyed by bauxite mining

Well-placed sources warn that a decision allowing the mine to proceed could be made within days



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WAGINA ISLAND, SOLOMON ISLANDS: An urgent international campaign has been launched to stop a proposed open-cast bauxite mine from devastating Wagina Island and the lives of approximately 2,000 people who call it home.

In 2020, Wagina residents won a landmark battle that stopped the proposed mine from proceeding.

Now the threat has returned.

The Save Wagina Island campaign has received information from well-placed sources indicating that a decision capable of reviving the mine may be imminent, potentially within days.

If the project proceeds, the consequences for Wagina Island and its people could be irreversible.

The previously proposed mine would affect approximately 60 per cent of the island's total land area. Publicly reported plans included clearing approximately 2,000 hectares of forest, extensive excavation, new roads and the movement of approximately 150 truckloads of bauxite every day for as long as 20 years.

This is not an isolated mining site in an uninhabited area.

Wagina is a small island of only 78 square kilometres. It is the home, food source, workplace and future of approximately 2,000 people.

Residents depend on the island's land, rivers, reefs and surrounding sea for fishing, farming, seaweed production, housing materials, clean water and daily survival.

Mining on this scale would place all of that at risk.

Old growth forest clearing, excavation, bauxite dust, heavy vehicle traffic, erosion and runoff could damage water sources, air quality, marine ecosystems, fishing grounds and agricultural land.

Once these systems are damaged, they cannot simply be replaced. The people of Wagina cannot move their farms, reefs, rivers and communities somewhere else.

The Solomon Islands Environmental Advisory Committee previously warned that the mine would have dramatic and likely irreversible consequences for Wagina's environment and residents.

The proposed mining area is so large that the question is not how the mine could coexist with the people of Wagina.

The real question is what would be left of Wagina once the mining was finished.

A community that has already been displaced

Most Wagina residents descend from I-Kiribati families who were relocated across the Pacific by British colonial authorities during the twentieth century.

They were forced to leave their original homes, rebuild their lives thousands of kilometres away and create a new community on Wagina.

They transformed the island into their home and developed livelihoods based on fishing, farming and seaweed production.

Now many fear that decisions made without them could destroy the home they spent generations rebuilding.

Wagina elder Tebukewa Mereki previously expressed the stakes in the clearest possible terms:

“If they destroy Wagina, we have nowhere else to go.”

The island won once, but the fight was never over

Wagina residents spent years fighting the proposed mine.

In 2019, the Solomon Islands Environmental Advisory Committee overturned the project's development consent after finding serious failures in the environmental assessment and community consultation process.

The mining company appealed, but in 2020 the Solomon Islands Minister for Environment upheld the decision stopping the project.

It was celebrated internationally as a historic victory for Wagina and for communities across the Pacific confronting destructive mining and logging projects.

However, Solomon Bauxite Limited was reported to have retained its mining lease. In January 2026, Wagina residents again publicly reaffirmed their opposition to bauxite mining on the island.

The danger never disappeared.

According to information now received by the Save Wagina Island campaign, a decision capable of bringing the project back to life may be extremely close.

This mine must be stopped

The position of the Save Wagina Island campaign is absolute.

The proposed bauxite mine must not proceed under the current company, a new company, a new owner or a revised development plan.

This is not a request for the mine to be improved.

It is not a request for additional consultation followed by approval.

It is not a request for a smaller mine or better conditions.

It is an urgent appeal to stop Wagina Island from being turned into a giant open-cast mining operation.

No environmental report, corporate promise or change of ownership can alter the fundamental reality that this mine could consume approximately 60 per cent of a small inhabited island.

Wagina is not an expendable mining deposit.

It is a living island and the home of approximately 2,000 people.

The people of Wagina urgently need help

Time is critical.

If the information received by the campaign is correct, there may be only days to bring sufficient attention and pressure to bear before a decision is made.

The Save Wagina Island campaign is urgently asking:

- Journalists and media organisations to investigate and report on the renewed threat.
- Environmental and human-rights organisations to speak publicly and demand that the mine be stopped.

- Pacific leaders, international governments, diplomats and development partners to raise the issue directly with the Solomon Islands Government.
- Scientists, lawyers, churches, community organisations and advocacy groups to stand with the people of Wagina.
- Members of the public to share Wagina's story and help make it impossible for this decision to occur without international scrutiny.
- The Solomon Islands Government to reject the mine and protect Wagina Island permanently.

Anything that brings attention to Wagina could help.

A news report, public statement, social media post, letter, interview or direct approach to the Solomon Islands Government could add to the pressure needed to stop the project.

The people of Wagina fought for years to save their island once.

They should not have to fight alone again.

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About Save Wagina Island

Save Wagina Island is an independent international campaign supporting the people of Wagina in their fight to permanently stop large-scale bauxite mining on their island.

Its purpose is simple: protect Wagina Island and ensure that its people do not lose their home, environment and livelihoods to mining. Go to savewagina.com for more.

Background sources:

ABC News:

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-11-07/wagina-island-wins-bid-stop-bauxite-mining-plan-solomon-islands/12855704>

The Guardian:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jun/07/the-little-island-that-won-how-a-tiny-pacific-community-fought-off-a-giant-mining-company>

Solomon Star:

<https://www.solomonstarnews.com/wagina-islanders-reaffirm-opposition-to-bauxite-mining/>

