

# MICRONESIA

## Chuukese

Activity: 2012-2020

### General notes

NA

### Movement start and end dates

- There was a significant movement for independence in Chuuk during the US Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands (TTPI) era (Roth 2015: 389). This movement appears to have died down by 1986, when Micronesia gained independence.
- Since 1986, Chuuk and the central government have been involved in disputes over the distribution of financial resources and ownership of natural resources (Dziedzic 2020: 233). This has ultimately led to a re-surgence of the Chuukese independence movement. The first evidence for separatist activity we could find is in 2012, when “the Chuuk Congress established the Chuuk Political Status Commission to examine options for the future political status of Chuuk. The commission’s final report, issued in December 2014, recommended secession, on the grounds that independence would provide Chuuk with greater control over its affairs and improve its economic prospects through direct access to foreign economic resources (including its own exclusive economic zone) and new foreign investment from the United States and other states” (Dziedzic 2020: 234). The question of an independence referendum is ongoing, especially in light of the renegotiation of the Compact of Free Association (CFA) due in 2023 (Pruett 2020). [start date: 2012; end date: ongoing]

### Dominant claim

- The dominant claim is for the independence of Chuuk state. This was made clear by a report by the Chuuk Political Status Commission which recommended secession from FSM on the grounds of securing foreign investment and other states (Dziedzic 2020: 234). [2012-2020: independence claim]

### Independence claims

- See above. [start date: 2012; end date: ongoing]

### Irredentist claims

NA

### Claimed territory

- The territory claimed by the Chuukese is the State of Chuuk. This includes the island groupings of Chuuk Lagoon, Namoneas, Faichuk, Hall Islands, Namonuito Atoll, Pattiw, and the Mortlock Islands. It appears that Faichuk supports the Chuukese claim, as multiple members of the Chuuk Political Status Commission were representatives from Faichuk, including the head of the

commission (CSPSC 2014: Online). We code this claim based on the Global Administrative Areas database.

### **Sovereignty declarations**

NA

### **Separatist armed conflict**

- We found no evidence for separatist violence. [NVIOLSD]

### **Historical context**

- The Chuuk region was estimated to have been settled around 0 CE. The Micronesian islands were given the name “Carolinas” by Spanish explorers in 1526. The Spanish Empire loosely held the islands from the 1500s. Claims by the German Empire in 1885 led to Spain winning legal recognition of the islands and establishing them as a colony in 1886. However, after the Spanish American War, Spain sold the islands to Germany in 1899. This colonial period saw frequent uprisings by the local population (West 2009: 532-3; Roth 2015: 389).
- During WWI, Japan occupied the islands, establishing a base in the Chuuk islands in 1914. The League of Nations awarded Japan authority over the islands after WWI. The USA captured all Japanese territory in the region between 1944-45. After WWII the UN gave the islands to the US under the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands (TTPI). These were transferred to civilian authority in 1951, subsequently seeing increased development (West 2009: 532-3; Roth 2015: 389).
- In 1965, the Congress of Micronesia was established with representatives from each of the islands in the TTPI (including those beyond the modern Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)) (West, 2009: 533). In 1975 delegates from Chuuk, Pohnpei, Yap, Mariana Islands, Marshall Islands and Palau participated in a constitutional convention to draft a constitution for Micronesia. The constitution was put to each of the islands in 1978, but was only ratified by the states of Chuuk, Pohnpei, Yap, and Kosrae (the states of modern FSM). This constitution came into effect on 10<sup>th</sup> May 1979 (Dziedzic 2020: 228-9). The constitution gives each state all power not reserved to the central government, such as “powers in relation to elementary and secondary schools, health services, local government, public safety, intra-state commerce, navigation in lagoons and rivers, land use and fishing within the 12-mile territorial sea” (Dziedzic 2020: 231; also see FSM, 2010: Online). All states have their own constitution, and judicial, legislative, and executive arms, largely mirroring the central government (Dziedzic 2020: 231; FSM 2010: Online).
- In 1981 the Chuuk Congress endorsed the separation of Faichuk, but this was blocked by President Nkayama (Dziedzic, 2020: 234; Kupferman, 2014). Chuuk itself was the site of a strong independence movement during the US TTPI era (Roth 2015: 389). During a 1983 plebiscite on accepting the Compact of Free Association (CFA), which was approved by 79% of the votes, Chuuk voted in favour of independence in the second ballot on alternative arrangements (Schwalbenberg, 1984: 172).
- FSM gained independence from the USA in 1986 after signing the CFA (West 2009: 533; Dziedzic 2020: 229).
- The 1979 constitution was amended in 1991 whereby the distinction between state and concurrent powers was clarified (Dziedzi 2020: 231).
- No concessions or restrictions were found in the ten years before the start date.

## Concessions and restrictions

- In 2012, the Chuuk Congress established the Chuuk Political Status Commission to outline political options for the future of the State of Chuuk. In December 2014, the commission released its findings (CSPSC 2014), recommending independence on the grounds that this would enable greater access to foreign investment, particularly in light of renegotiating a CFA with the USA (Dziedzic 2020: 234; Puas 2020: 192). However, the commission did not provide an economic model for an independent Chuuk or a legal basis for this independence. As the central government did not agree to independence, we do not code a concession.
- An independence referendum was set to occur at the same time as federal elections in 2015. However, this was pushed back to 2019, and then further postponed to 2020 and later 2022. These postponements are down to the ongoing renegotiation of the CFA with the USA, with the threat of foreign aid being cut to Chuuk if it secedes. Chuuk is therefore in a state of 'wait and see' regarding an independence referendum (Kiedrowski 2020: Online; ABC 2019: Online; RNZ 2020: Online).

## Regional autonomy

- Under the 1979 constitution, Micronesia is a federal state. This constitution gives each state all power not reserved to the central government, such as "powers in relation to elementary and secondary schools, health services, local government, public safety, intra-state commerce, navigation in lagoons and rivers, land use and fishing within the 12-mile territorial sea." (Dziedzic 2020: 231), as well as other concurrent powers (FSM 2010: Online). All states have their own constitution, and judicial, legislative, and executive arms, largely mirroring the central government (Dziedzic 2020: 231; FSM, 2010: Online). [2012-2020: regional autonomy]

## De facto independence

NA

## Major territorial changes

NA

## EPR2SDM

<i>Movement</i>	Chuuk
<i>Scenario</i>	No Match
<i>EPR group(s)</i>	-
<i>Gwgroupid(s)</i>	-

## Power access

- The Chuukese have access to central power. President Mori (2007-2015) was from Chuuk. Other cabinet members include Lorin Roberts, a long term deputy secretary and secretary of foreign affairs was also from Chuuk (FSM, 2001: Online), whilst the current education secretary Gardenia Aisek is also from Chuuk (Pacific Women in Politics, ns: Online; FSM, nd a: Online; FSM, nd b: Online). Due to the President from 2007-2015 being from Chuuk, a senior partner can be coded, whilst a junior partner can be coded for the rest of the period due to the presence of multiple Chuukese cabinet members. [2012-2015: senior partner] [2016-2020: junior partner]

## Group size

- We could not find data on self-identified Chuukese and therefore use Chuuk's population as a proxy. According to the 2010 census, the state of Chuuk had a population of 48,654 while Micronesia as a whole had a population of 102,843. [0.4730]

## Regional concentration

- We could not find demographic data on self-identified Chuukese, but given this movement's regional character, regional concentration is highly likely. [regional concentration]

## Kin

- We found no evidence. [no kin]

## Sources

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## **Faichukese**

Activity: 1986-2020

### **General notes**

- Faichuk are four islands within the state of Chuuk. These islands are Paata, Polle, Wonei, and Tol, but are often collectively referred to as Tol.

### **Movement start and end dates**

- According to a 2003 Pacific Island Report article, Faichuk leaders have been pressuring for separate statehood within Micronesia or even separate independence (in association with the U.S.) since before Micronesia's independence in 1986. In agreement with this, Bautista (2010: 56) reports that the current request for statehood dates back to the early 1970s. Since we lack a clearer indication, we peg the start date to 1970. However, because Micronesia attained independence only in 1986, we only code the movement from 1986. We found no evidence of violent separatist activity and thus indicate prior non-violent activity.
- The movement's dominant claim appears to be for separation from Chuuk, but there is also talk about becoming a separate associated state of the US. There was a referendum on the separation from Chuuk in 2000, but while the vote resulted in a clear majority for separation neither Chuuk nor the central government did take any action. In 2005, a bill was proposed to make Faichuk a separate state. A 2011 news report suggests that the movement was ongoing, but that the claim has shifted to independence (Kaselehlle Press 2011). We found no evidence of separatist claims after 2011 as demands appear to have shifted to independence for Chuuk as a whole, which is coded as part of the Chuukese movement (CSPSC 2014: Online). However, based on the 10-years rule, we code the movement as ongoing as of 2020. [start date: 1970; end date: ongoing]

### **Dominant claim**

- The movement's dominant claim until 2011 appears to be for separation from Chuuk, but there is also talk about becoming a separate associated state of the US (Bautista 2010; Hauk 2002; Pacific Islands Report 2003). In 2011, the dominant claim shifted to independence (Kaselehlle Press 2011). [1986-2011: sub-state secession claim; 2012-2020: independence claim]

### **Independence claims**

- There is indication that independence was an SDM claim prior to 2011 (Bautista 2010; Hauk 2002; Pacific Islands Report 2003). However, it is unclear how politically significant these claims were. Therefore, an independence claim is coded from 2011 when leaders of Faichuk announced their intention to secede outright (Kaselehlle Press 2011). [start date: 2011; end date: ongoing]

### **Irredentist claims**

NA

## **Claimed territory**

- The territory claimed by the Faichukese consists of the islands Paata, Onelsom, Romanum, Pwene, Tolensom, Fanapanges, Eot, and Eil (Haglegam 2012). We code this claim based on the Global Administrative Areas database.

## **Sovereignty declarations**

NA

## **Separatist armed conflict**

- No violence was found for the Faichuk movement, and thus we code the entire time period as NVIOLSD. [NVIOLSD]

## **Historical context**

- The Chuuk region was estimated to have been settled around 0 CE. The Micronesian islands were given the name The Carolinas by Spanish explorers in 1526. The Spanish Empire loosely held the islands from the 1500s. Claims by the German Empire in 1885 led to Spain winning legal recognition of the islands and establishing them as a colony in 1886. However, after the Spanish American War, Spain sold the islands to Germany in 1899. This colonial period saw frequent uprisings by the local population (West, 2009: 532-3; Roth, 2015: 389).
- During WWI, Japan occupied the islands, establishing a base in the Chuuk islands in 1914. The League of Nations awarded Japan authority over the islands after WWI. The USA captured all Japanese territory in the region between 1944-45. After WWII the UN gave the islands to the US under the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands (TTPI). These were transferred to civilian authority in 1951, subsequently seeing increased development (West, 2009: 532-3; Roth, 2015: 389).
- In 1965, the Congress of Micronesia was established with representatives from each of the islands in the TTPI (including those beyond the modern Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)) (West, 2009: 533). In 1975 delegates from Chuuk, Pohnpei, Yap, Mariana Islands, Marshall Islands and Palau participated in a constitutional convention to draft a constitution for Micronesia. The constitution was put to each of the islands in 1978, but was only ratified by the states of Chuuk, Pohnpei, Yap, and Kosrae (the states of modern FSM). This constitution came into effect on 10<sup>th</sup> May 1979 (Dziedzic, 2020: 228-9). This constitution gives each state all power not reserved to the central government, such as “powers in relation to elementary and secondary schools, health services, local government, public safety, intra-state commerce, navigation in lagoons and rivers, land use and fishing within the 12-mile territorial sea.” (Dziedzic, 2020: 231), as well as other concurrent powers (FSM, 2010: Online). All states have their own constitution, and judicial, legislative, and executive arms, largely mirroring the central government (Dziedzic, 2020: 231; FSM, 2010: Online).
- There was a precedent set for separation of regions within the TTPI, with Kosrae separating from Pohnpei in 1976. This inspired Faichuk to seek separation from Chuuk, with the Faichuk wishing to become a fifth state of FSM. In 1981 the Chuuk Congress endorsed the separation of Faichuk, but this was blocked by President Nkayama (Dziedzic, 2020: 234; Kupferman, 2014). However, Chuuk at large was the site of a strong independence movement during the US TTPI era (Roth, 2015: 389). During a 1983 plebiscite on accepting the Compact of Free Association (CFA), which was approved by 79% of the votes, but in the second ballot on alternative arrangements Chuuk voted in favour of independence, whilst the vast majority of the voters of Faichuk boycotted this second ballot (Schwalbenberg, 1984: 172). This demonstrates the divergent attitudes towards the CFA and central government arrangements. FSM gained independence from the USA in 1986 after signing the CFA (West, 2009: 533; Dziedzic, 2020: 229).

- No concessions or restrictions were found in the ten years before the first year of the SDM

### **Concessions and restrictions**

- A referendum on Faichuk's separation from Chuuk state was held in 2000, with 90% voting in favour (Dziedzic, 2020: 229). According to the Associated Press State & Local Wire (2000), "[t]he statehood drive was prompted by the Chuuk state legislature, which passed a law last year calling for a constitutional convention and a plebiscite." However, it is not clear whether this referendum had the agreement of the central government. There were no moves towards implementation of the referendum results, so no concession is coded.
  - o Note: there were several bills introduced for the formation of a separate Faichuk, but the proposals were never implemented (Minority Rights Group, n.d.: Online; Dziedzic, 2020: 234).
- In 2003, the FSM renegotiated the CFA with the USA, which is due to expire in 2023 (West, 2009: 533).
- Dziedzic notes that "A bill to create Faichuk as a new state was defeated in the national Congress in 2005" (2020: 234). This was proposed by Faichuk's representative to congress (Freedom House, 2005: Online). As this proposal was rejected and no change in autonomy resulted, no restriction or concession is coded. It is also the last identified claim by Faichuk for more autonomy.

### **Regional autonomy**

NA

### **De facto independence**

NA

### **Major territorial changes**

- [1986: host change (new)]

### **EPR2SDM**

<i>Movement</i>	Faichuk
<i>Scenario</i>	No match
<i>EPR group(s)</i>	-
<i>Gwgroupid(s)</i>	-

### **Power access**

- Micronesia has had 9 presidents since its independence in 1986. None seems to stem from Faichuk. The same applies to Micronesia's 8 vice presidents. We could identify one cabinet member from Faichuk: Reverend Kimeuo Kimiuro, Office of the National Election Director (FSG, 2008: Online). There could be more. If a cabinet member is mentioned on the central government website, it sometimes references the member as a coming from or having worked in a specific state. However, since Faichuk is not recognized as a state by the central government, it is only rarely mentioned whether the cabinet member comes from Faichuk (see Rev. Kimiuro).



- Overall, the Faichuk Islanders' representation in the national executive seems limited, though there seems to have been some representation, warranting a junior partner code. This case would profit from more research. [1986-2020: junior partner]

### Group size

- We could not find demographic data on self-identified Faichuk Islanders. According to the 2010 census, the Faichuk islands had a population of 11,305 while Micronesia as a whole had a population of 102,843. [0.1099]

### Regional concentration

- We could not find demographic data on self-identified Faichuk Islanders, but given this movement's regional character, regional concentration is highly likely. [regional concentration]

### Kin

- We found no evidence. [no kin]

### Sources

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