



CENTRAL BANK of SOLOMON ISLANDS

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BEWARE OF FAKE MONEY

By CBSI Media

Each year the Central Bank of Solomon Islands (CBSI) continues to receive alarming reports and incidences of individuals tendering Counterfeit currency (or false money) to unsuspecting businesses, which eventually end up at the Commercial Banks. The CBSI takes such report of counterfeits with seriousness due to the negative impact on individual victims, businesses and the economy in general.

It is encouraging that the public is reporting counterfeits to the CBSI, and this is extremely useful because it allows the CBSI to (i) assess the extent of the volume of counterfeits in circulation and (ii) consider necessary action. However, with limited information and evidence, the Criminals involved in this illegal activity continue to remain at large. CBSI encourages the Public to share information that will lead to the arrest of the Counterfeiters.

The risks of flooding the economy with counterfeit currency affects every person therefore, it is every person's business to find the Criminals and bring them to justice. Year 2021 recorded the highest ever incidences of counterfeit local currency in circulation, and will continue to increase as long as the Criminals are not brought to Justice.

How serious is the situation?

In 2021, the total counterfeit (fake money) reported amounts to \$7,140.00. From the total, the fake notes comprise of 27 pieces of \$100 fake notes, 88 pieces of \$50 fake notes and 2 pieces of \$20 fake notes. In comparison, fake notes reported in 2020 totaled only \$500.00 and \$700.00 in 2019. From the reported cases, it is clear the Counterfeiters are only targeting higher denomination from \$20, \$50 and \$100 notes.

Historically, the first incident of counterfeit note was recorded in the 1990s. Over the years, sophistication in printing technology and the lack of support from the public in reporting the perpetrators continue to encourage counterfeiting. Counterfeiting is an international problem that costs countries billions of dollars, and Solomon Islands has experienced the prevalence in recent years. The public and, especially business houses are vulnerable to falling victim to counterfeit notes given the sharp increase in reported cases. However, this might only be a tip of the ice berg and the Counterfeiters are still printing and are formulating ways to circulate the fake notes.

CBSI encourages the public to be vigilant and to educate oneself about the important Security features that protect the integrity of our local currency. Resources are available at the CBSI, commercial banks and online to increase awareness. Any person should be able to identify at least some of the main security features of any of the banknotes and differentiate a counterfeit or fake note from a genuine one.

So how can we differentiate a legal tender banknote from a counterfeit banknote?

Look out for the following features:

- Woven silver thread line
- Watermark depicting eagles head (new series) it is visible from both sides of the banknotes
- Silver dual image hologram on \$50.00 and \$100.00
- Colour and texture of banknotes, colour should stand out and should be rough when feel with hands
- Look for electrotype (word CBSI) at the background when hold against light
- Block of invisible inks on the surface of the notes
- Red fluorescent serial numbering, sizes and edges are even.
- Do a simple colour test by rubbing against a white paper, the colour of the note will be noticed on the paper.
- What to do when you have a counterfeited banknote in your possession.
- Hold on to the banknote and do not re-circulate it
- Contact CBSI or your nearest Police Station
- Take note of the description of the person who passed the banknote to you and his/her companions.

Counterfeiting is illegal in Solomon Islands

According to the Laws of Solomon Islands, only the CBSI will issue Bank notes and coins. These currencies are in various denominations ranging from \$100 notes to 10 cent coins. Any person or business found to be printing and issuing legal tender notes and coins, is committing an offence, and can be fined \$50,000.00 or imprisoned for 7 years.

The increasing incidence of counterfeit notes circulating in the country indicate that certain individuals or businesses are actively involved in this illegal act and are destroying the Country and its economy. Many of the Victims are hard-working Market vendors, Canteen Stores and many large and small businesses within the communities. Protect yourself and your business from falling victim and inspect every note that is tendered.

The simple rule of thumb is to always CHECK, LOOK and FEEL the notes. Hold the banknote up to a light and look for the security features embedded in the notes. If You cannot identify the Security features, make sure to identify the person who tendered the note and any other personal details that may be helpful to the Police and CBSI. Immediately report any incidence directly to the CBSI or to the Police.

Let us work together to stop counterfeiting in our country in this new year.

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