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Bougainville may be the world's next country   –   13th December, 2019

Level 4

A possible new member may be added to the global family of nations. Bougainville in Papua New Guinea (PNG) has voted for independence. A referendum was held on the island. Over 181,000 people cast their vote and nearly 98 per cent of them voted in favour of independence. It was a non-binding referendum, which means the PNG government does not have to make it law. However, PNG should act on the result.

Bougainville is the largest of the PNG chain of islands. It is part of the Solomon Islands and used to be called the Republic of North Solomons. Bougainvilleans started a fight for independence in the 1960s. Bougainville became part of PNG in 1976. This started the decade-long Bougainville Civil War, in which 20,000 people lost their lives. The Prime Minister of PNG said his government was committed to respecting the poll's result.

Level 5

There is a possibility of a new member may being added to the global family of nations. Bougainville in Papua New Guinea (PNG) has voted overwhelmingly for independence. A two-week referendum was held on the island. It ended on the 7th of December. It was a non-binding referendum, which means the PNG government does not have to make it law. However, PNG should now consider acting on the result of the vote. Voters voted for greater autonomy or full independence. Over 181,000 people cast their vote and nearly 98 per cent of them voted in favour of independence.

Bougainville is the largest of the PNG chain of islands. It is geographically part of the Solomon Islands. It used to be called the Republic of North Solomons. It has a population of 250,000 people. Bougainvilleans started a fight for independence in the 1960s. This was a decade before PNG got independence in 1975. Bougainville became part of PNG in 1976. This started the Bougainville Civil War between 1988–1998, in which 20,000 people lost their lives. The Prime Minister of PNG said his government was committed to adhering to the poll's result.

Level 6

The process is under way for the possible introduction of a new member to the global family of nations. The people of Bougainville in Papua New Guinea have voted overwhelmingly for independence in a referendum. The vote was held on the island between the 23rd of November and the 7th of December. The vote was a non-binding referendum, which means the Papua New Guinea (PNG) government does not have to pass it into law. However, PNG gave the vote its full consent and should now consider acting on the result of the vote. Voters had two options - greater autonomy or full independence. Over 181,000 people cast their ballot and nearly 98 per cent of them voted in favour of independence.

Bougainville is the largest island of the PNG chain of islands. It is geographically part of the Solomon Islands archipelago and used to be known as the Republic of North Solomons. It has a population of around 250,000 people. Bougainvilleans started a fight to achieve their independence in the 1960s. This was a decade before Papua New Guinea was granted independence in 1975. Bougainville was declared part of PNG in 1976. This sparked the Bougainville Civil War between 1988–1998. Over 20,000 people lost their lives in that conflict. The Prime Minister of PNG said: "I ask for some time for the people of PNG to absorb and process this result." He said his government was committed to adhering to the poll's result.