

18 March 2026

195 Lambton Quay
Private Bag 18-901
Wellington 6160
New Zealand

T +64 4 439 8000
F +64 4 472 9596

OIA 30684

Out of scope

Thank you for your email of 3 February 2026, in which you request the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

"Under the Official Information Act, please supply copies of the following briefings listed in the response to my OIA 30631 of 9 January 2026:

- *A submission entitled "Informal Note - Potential water management support to Fiji", dated 1 December 2025.*
- *A submission entitled "Chinese Naval Extended Area Deployment (EAD) Update, dated 5 December 2025.*
- *A submission entitled "Further advice on Budget 2026 to inform initiative submission", dated 5 December 2025.*
- *A Submission entitled "Instruments of Full Powers - Japan Information Security Agreement and Japan Acquisition and Cross Servicing Agreement", dated 8 December 2025.*
- *A submission entitled "Post-2025 climate-related support for developing countries", dated 11 December 2025.*
- *A submission entitled, "Increased funding for Pacific water security activities: Kiribati and Tuvalu", dated 15 December 2025.*
- *A submission entitled, "Proliferation Security Initiative: Exercise Maru 2026", dated 15 December 2025."*

On 3 March 2026, the timeframes for responding to your request were extended by an additional 10 working days due to the consultations necessary to make a decision on your request (section 15A(1)(b) of the OIA refers).

#	Title	Date	Decision
1.	Informal Note - Potential water management support to Fiji"	1 December 2025	6(a)
2.	Chinese Naval Extended Area Deployment	8 December 2025	6(a), 9(2)(a)

#	Title	Date	Decision
3.	Further advice on Budget 2026 to inform initiative submission	5 December 2025	Withheld in full 9(2)(f)(iv); 9(2)(g)(i)
4.	Instruments of Full Powers - Japan Information Security Agreement and Japan Acquisition and Cross Servicing Agreement	8 December 2025	9(2)(a)
5.	Post-2025 climate-related support for developing countries	11 December 2025	Withheld in full 9(2)(f)(iv); 9(2)(g)(i); 6(a)
6.	Increased funding for Pacific water security activities: Kiribati and Tuvalu	15 December 2025	6(a); 9(2)(a)
7.	Proliferation Security Initiative: Exercise Maru 2026	15 December 2025	6(a); 9(2)(a)

Some information is withheld under the following sections of the OIA:

- 6(a): to avoid prejudicing the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the New Zealand Government; and
- 9(2)(a): to protect individuals' privacy.

Document three and five are withheld in full under the following sections of the OIA:

- 9(2)(f)(iv): to protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials; and
- 9(2)(g)(i): to protect the free and frank expression of opinions by departments.

Where the information has been withheld under section 9 of the OIA, no public interest in releasing the information has been identified that would override the reasons for withholding it.

Please note that it is our policy to proactively release our responses to official information requests where possible. Therefore, our response to your request (with your personal information removed) may be published on the Ministry website:

www.mfat.govt.nz/en/about-us/contact-us/official-information-act-responses/

If you have any questions about this decision, you can contact us by email at: DM-ESD@mfat.govt.nz. You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision by contacting www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'S' followed by a horizontal line and a small upward stroke.

Sarah Corbett
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Informal Note — Potential water management support to Fiji

- Following the visit of Fiji's Minister for Agriculture and Waterways, Hon Tomasi Tunabuna, to New Zealand in November, MFAT and MBIE officials are exploring options to support Fiji in addressing water management challenges.
- Fiji faces serious water security challenges from climate change, intensified flooding, aging infrastructure and high leakage rates. Urban areas struggle with rising demand and contamination risks, while a lack of reliable access in rural communities undermines health, food security and agriculture development. Outlined in its cross-government Water Sector Strategy 2050, Fiji plans to address these challenges through strengthening climate-resilient infrastructure, advancing integrated water management, and promoting nature-based solutions to protect communities, secure water supply, and sustain key economic sectors.
- s6(a)

s6(a)

Further support

- s6(a)
- Water security and management are not agreed priorities under our Fiji-New Zealand Statement of Partnership. However, our IDC programme provides limited support through community-level partnerships to improve rural access to clean water and sanitation, as well as part of an agriculture-related land-use planning activity. In addition, the Government of Fiji has confirmed that approximately NZ\$5.1 million from New Zealand's untagged climate flexible finance contribution will be allocated to drainage and flood protection projects.

Pacific Melanesia & Micronesia Division
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
1 December 2025



TE OPE KĀTUA O AOTEAROA
DEFENCE FORCE



5 December 2025

Minister of Foreign Affairs
Minister of Defence

For information by 8 December 2025
For information by 8 December 2025

Chinese Naval Extended Area Deployment (EAD) Update

BRIEFING Overview Submission

PURPOSE To provide an update on government agencies' response planning for an extended area deployment (EAD) by the People's Liberation Army – Navy (PLA- N) in New Zealand's maritime domain area of interest.

Recommended referrals

Minister for National Security and Intelligence	For information by	8 December 2025
Minister Responsible for the GCSB & NZSIS	For information by	8 December 2025
Associate Minister of Transport	For information by	8 December 2025

Contact details

NAME	ROLE	DIVISION	WORK PHONE
Charlotte Beaglehole	Divisional Manager	International Security and Disarmament Division	s9(2)(a)
Katie Roche	Acting Head International Branch	International Branch, Ministry of Defence	
s6(a)	Director Strategic Commitments	Strategic Commitments and Engagements Branch, New Zealand Defence Force	

Minister's Office to complete

- | | | |
|--|---|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Approved | <input type="checkbox"/> Noted | <input type="checkbox"/> Referred |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Needs amendment | <input type="checkbox"/> Declined | <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Overtaken by events | <input type="checkbox"/> See Minister's notes | |

Comments

Chinese Naval Extended Area Deployment (EAD) Update

Key points

• New Zealand officials are monitoring a newly formed, s6(a) Chinese PLA-N task group in the Philippine Sea. s6(a)
s6(a)

• Earlier this week, Australian Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles confirmed to media Australian Defence Force tracking of the task group, noting there was no certainty over its intended route. New Zealand officials remain in close contact with Australian counterparts, s6(a)

• s6(a)

•

•

•

• New Zealand's own maritime activities are underpinned by international law. s6(a)

and ensuring our messaging is consistent with and underlines our strong adherence to international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

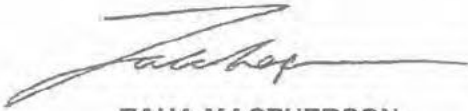
• s6(a)

•

•

•

Chinese Naval Extended Area Deployment (EAD) Update



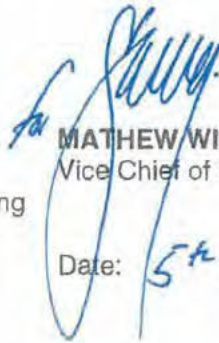
TAHA MACPHERSON
for Secretary of Foreign
Affairs and Trade

Date: 5/12/2025



BEN MCLACHLAN
Acting Deputy Secretary
Defence Policy and Planning

Date: 5/12/2025



MATHEW WILLIAMS
Vice Chief of Defence Force

Date: 5th December 2025

BRIG
COS

AOD

Recommendations

It is recommended that you:

- | | | |
|---|---|----------|
| 1 | Note that New Zealand officials are monitoring a newly formed, s6(a) PLA-N task group in the Philippine Sea. | Yes / No |
| 2 | s6(a) | Yes / No |
| 3 | | Yes / No |
| 4 | | Yes / No |
| 5 | | |
| 6 | Refer a copy of this submission to Minister of National Security and Intelligence, Minister Responsible for the GCSB & NZSIS, and Associate Minister of Transport. | Yes / No |

Rt Hon Winston Peters
Minister of Foreign Affairs

Date: / /

Hon Judith Collins KC
Minister of Defence

Date: / /

Chinese Naval Extended Area Deployment (EAD) Update Report

1. This report provides an update on response planning for an extended area deployment by PLA-N in New Zealand's maritime domain area of interest. s6(a)

Context

2. On 1 December 2025 Australian Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles publicly confirmed that Australia is monitoring Chinese PLA-N vessels in the Philippine Sea. New Zealand officials are in close contact with Australian counterparts and maintaining situational awareness of these vessels. s6(a)
3. More broadly we anticipate that Chinese actions, such as the PLA-N task group that transited the Tasman Sea in February and China's launch of an inter-continental ballistic missile (ICBM) into the Pacific in September 2024, will be a persistent feature of our strategic environments s6(a)
4. While TG-107 was considered to have operated in accordance with international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), s6(a)

This included the manner in which the task group notified its intentions to conduct live fire exercises, which we consider did not align with international best practice and caused several commercial airlines to change route.

5. The deployment of TG-107 was consistent with China's incremental expansion of its maritime security presence in the South Pacific over the past decade. Beyond PLA-N surface combatants, Beijing has deployed a broad range of naval vessels to the region, including but not limited to hospital ships, s6(a) large amphibious vessels in support of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) operations, and outer space event support ships. s6(a)

s6(a)

Released under the Official Information Act

Chinese Naval Extended Area Deployment (EAD) Update

s6(a)

10. Deployments of PLA-N task groups are a frequent occurrence in China's immediate region
s6(a)

s6(a)

11. In all scenarios, New Zealand's response would be in accordance with international law.
s6(a)

Released under the Official Information Act

Chinese Naval Extended Area Deployment (EAD) Update
s6(a)

20. New Zealand's own maritime activities are underpinned by international law,
s6(a)

Released under the Official Information Act

Chinese Naval Extended Area Deployment (EAD) Update
s6(a)

27. Foreign vessels (including warships and other government vessels) have no general right of port access or entry into New Zealand's internal waters. New Zealand can set conditions of entry, and we can lawfully decline requests by these vessels for port calls.

28. Diplomatic clearance is required for foreign state vessels, including foreign naval vessels, to enter New Zealand's territorial sea, internal waters and ports for any reason other than for "innocent passage" through our territorial sea (within 12nm). The legal authority for this comes from the Crown's foreign affairs prerogative power. Requests for diplomatic clearance are submitted to and processed by the Ministry, in consultation with other agencies. The indicative timeframe for processing a diplomatic clearance request is six weeks.

29. s6(a)

. s6(a)

And New Zealand's nuclear-free legislation forbids visits by nuclear-propelled or nuclear-armed vessels to our ports and internal waters.

s6(a)

Next steps

s6(a)

RESTRICTED

Page 9 of 15

Chinese Naval Extended Area Deployment (EAD) Update

Annexes

s6(a)

Released under the Official Information Act

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

Page 10 of 15

Chinese Naval Extended Area Deployment (EAD) Update
s6(a)

Released under the Official Information Act

RESTRICTED

Released under the Official Information Act

Released under the Official Information Act

Released under the Official Information Act

Released under the Official Information Act

Released under the Official Information Act



8 December 2025

Minister of Foreign Affairs

For action by

15 December 2025

Instruments of Full Powers – Japan Information Security Agreement and Japan Acquisition and Cross Servicing Agreement

BRIEFING Decision Submission

PURPOSE Your signature is sought on two Instruments of Full Powers conferring legal authority to sign the *Agreement between the Government of New Zealand and the Government of Japan on the Security of Information* and the *Agreement between the Government of New Zealand and the Government of Japan Concerning the Reciprocal Provision of Supplies and Services Between the Self-Defence Forces of Japan and the New Zealand Defence Forces*.

Recommended referrals

Minister for National Security and Intelligence	For information by	15 December 2025
Minister of Defence	For information by	15 December 2025
Minister Responsible for the GCSB	For information by	15 December 2025
Minister Responsible for the NZSIS	For information by	15 December 2025

Contact details

NAME	ROLE	DIVISION	WORK PHONE
Carlie Rua	Treaty Officer	Legal Division	s9(2)(a)
Christine Nam	Lead Adviser	Legal Division	

Minister's Office to complete

- | | | |
|--|---|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Approved | <input type="checkbox"/> Noted | <input type="checkbox"/> Referred |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Needs amendment | <input type="checkbox"/> Declined | <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Overtaken by events | <input type="checkbox"/> See Minister's notes | |

Comments

Instruments of Full Powers – Japan Information Security Agreement and Japan Acquisition and Cross Servicing Agreement

Key points

Japan Information Sharing Agreement

- In June 2024, Prime Minister Luxon and former Japan Prime Minister Kishida announced substantive conclusion of the *Agreement between the Government of New Zealand and the Government of Japan on the Security of Information* (the Information Security Agreement).
- On 17 February 2025, Cabinet agreed that New Zealand sign the Information Security Agreement [CAB-25-MIN-0027].
- The Information Security Agreement is a treaty-level instrument that facilitates the exchange of classified information up to Top Secret level between New Zealand and Japan.
- It is proposed that the Minister Responsible for the GCSB and Minister Responsible for the NZSIS, Hon Judith Collins, signs the Information Security Agreement on 19 December 2025 during a visit to Tokyo. Minister Collins will meet with Minister Toshimitsu Motegi, Japan's Minister of Foreign Affairs, who will sign the Information Security Agreement on behalf of Japan.
- Accordingly, an Instrument of Full Powers for Minister Collins to sign the Information Security Agreement is **attached** for your signature.

Japan Acquisition and Cross Servicing Agreement

- Officials concluded negotiations on the *Agreement between the Government of New Zealand and the Government of Japan Concerning the Reciprocal Provision of Supplies and Services Between the Self-Defence Forces of Japan and the New Zealand Defence Forces* (the Acquisition and Cross Servicing Agreement) in September 2025.
- Cabinet is scheduled to review and approve New Zealand signing the Acquisition and Cross Servicing Agreement on 8 December 2025 [ECO-25-SUB-0206].
- The Acquisition and Cross Servicing Agreement is a treaty-level instrument which sets out the legal conditions and practical arrangements necessary for reciprocal logistics support between the New Zealand Defence Force and Japan Self-Defence Forces.
- Subject to Cabinet's approval, it is proposed that the Minister of Defence, Hon Judith Collins, signs the Acquisition and Cross Servicing Agreement on 19 December 2025 during a visit to Tokyo. Minister Collins will meet with Minister Toshimitsu Motegi, Japan's Minister of Foreign Affairs, who will sign the Acquisition and Cross Servicing Agreement on behalf of Japan.
- Accordingly, an Instrument of Full Powers for Minister Collins to sign the Acquisition and Cross Servicing Agreement is **attached** for your signature.



Victoria Hallum
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Instruments of Full Powers – Japan Information Security Agreement and
Japan Acquisition and Cross Servicing Agreement
Recommendations

It is recommended that you:

- | | | |
|---|---|-----------------|
| 1 | Sign the attached Instrument of Full Powers for the Minister of Defence, Hon Judith Collins, to sign the <i>Agreement between the Government of New Zealand and the Government of Japan on the Security of Information</i> . | Yes / No |
| 2 | Sign the attached Instrument of Full Powers for the Minister of Defence, Hon Judith Collins, to sign the <i>Agreement between the Government of New Zealand and the Government of Japan Concerning the Reciprocal Provision of Supplies and Services Between the Self-Defence Forces of Japan and the New Zealand Defence Forces</i> . | Yes / No |
| 3 | Refer a copy of this submission to the Minister for National Security and Intelligence, Minister of Defence and Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs. | Yes / No |

Rt Hon Winston Peters
Minister of Foreign Affairs

Date: / /

Released under the Official Information Act

I, WINSTON RAYMOND PETERS
Minister of Foreign Affairs
of New Zealand

do hereby certify that

The Honourable Judith Anne Collins
Minister of Defence

is vested with full powers and authority to sign, on behalf of the Government of New Zealand, the *Agreement between the Government of New Zealand and the Government of Japan Concerning the Reciprocal Provision of Supplies and Services Between the Self-Defence Forces of Japan and the New Zealand Defence Forces*.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have signed and sealed these presents at _____, this _____ day of _____ 2025.

Rt Hon Winston Raymond Peters
Minister of Foreign Affairs

Released under the Official Information Act



15 December 2025

Minister of Foreign Affairs

For approval by

19 December 2025

Increased funding for Pacific water security activities: Kiribati and Tuvalu

BRIEFING Decision Submission

PURPOSE This submission seeks your approval to increase International Development Cooperation (IDC) funding for two existing Pacific water security activities in Kiribati and Tuvalu.

Contact details

NAME	ROLE	DIVISION	WORK PHONE
Karen Murray	Divisional Manager	Development People and Planet	s9(2)(a)
Kritesh Velji	Unit Manager	Development People and Planet	

Minister's Office to complete

- | | | |
|--|---|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Approved | <input type="checkbox"/> Noted | <input type="checkbox"/> Referred |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Needs amendment | <input type="checkbox"/> Declined | <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Overtaken by events | <input type="checkbox"/> See Minister's notes | |

Comments

Increased funding for Pacific water security activities

Key points

- s6(a)
- In line with this approach, we recommend Kiribati rejoins the Pacific Partnership for Atoll Water Security (PPAWS), funded by New Zealand for 2025-2028 through the *Strengthening Water Resilience* IDC activity and delivered by the Pacific Community (SPC). Other countries in PPAWS include the Cook Islands, Nauru, Niue, the Republic of Marshall Islands, Tokelau, Tonga and Tuvalu.
- New Zealand has a strong track record in water security projects that improve resilience for vulnerable communities, particularly atoll countries that rely solely on rainwater or groundwater.
- Kiribati was part of the first two phases of PPAWS (*2015-2019 Strengthening Water Security in Vulnerable Island States* and *2019-2026 Managing Water Scarcity*)
s6(a)
- The cost of including Kiribati in the third phase of PPAWS is NZ\$1,800,000 and can be funded within existing IDC baselines. This will increase the overall *Strengthening Water Resilience* activity budget from NZ\$18,750,000 to NZ\$20,550,000. We will discuss with your office as to whether this could be announced during your forthcoming visit.
- Additionally, we seek your agreement to provide further support for solar still distillation (SSD) in Tuvalu to complete installation of 60 remaining units in outer island communities.
- The Ministry has funded Engineers Without Borders New Zealand (EWBNZ) NZ\$1,749,793 to deliver the SSD project in the Cook Islands, Kiribati, and Tuvalu as part of a regional Reduce Risk of Water Scarcity Activity. SSD installation is complete in Kiribati and 50% complete in Tuvalu and the Cook Islands. The Cook Islands is scheduled for completion by mid-2026. Recipient communities report positive impacts.
- The remaining installations in Tuvalu are in remote locations. Completion has been delayed and cannot be completed within the existing budget due to cost increases for shipping, local partner costs, and technical challenges beyond the control of EWBNZ.
- The additional cost to complete installation of the remaining 60 outer island units is NZ\$355,000, taking the total funding provided to EWBNZ to NZ\$2,104,793. This will increase the total cost of the regional Reduce Risk of Water Scarcity activity from NZ\$24,978,000 to NZ\$25,333,000. Funding will come from the existing IDC baseline.

Bernadette Cavanagh
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Increased funding for Pacific water security activities

Recommendations

It is recommended that you:

- | | | |
|---|--|-----------------|
| 1 | Agree to a NZ\$1,800,000 increase to the <i>Strengthening Water Resilience</i> activity budget to include Kiribati in the new phase of the Pacific Partnership for Atoll Water Security, bringing the total cost of the activity to NZ\$20,550,000 across the region. | Yes / No |
| 2 | Agree to a NZ\$355,000 increase to the <i>Reduce Risk of Water Scarcity</i> activity budget to complete installation of the 60 remaining units in outer island communities in Tuvalu, bringing the total cost of the activity to NZ\$25,333,000 across the region. | Yes / No |
| 3 | Note that these two activities are within the delegation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to approve. | Yes / No |
| 4 | Note that these increases will be funded from the existing IDC baseline and there is no resource implications. | Yes / No |

Rt Hon Winston Peters
Minister of Foreign Affairs

Date: / /

Increased funding for Pacific water security activities

Report

1. This submission seeks approval to increase funding (from within existing baselines) to two Pacific water security activities.
2. New Zealand has a long history of delivering water security projects across the region. A key area of support is for atoll countries with no surface water that are solely reliant on rainwater and/or groundwater. This support is delivered through initiatives such as the multi-phase Pacific Partnership for Atoll Water Security (PPAWS) programme coordinated by the Pacific Community (SPC), and initiatives delivering alternate water generation such as solar still distillation.

Activity: Strengthening Water Resilience

3. Kiribati is heavily dependent on rainfall and groundwater. Rising sea levels, prolonged droughts and unsafe drinking water pose major challenges to health and livelihoods. Strengthening water security and atoll resilience are key priorities for Government of Kiribati.
4. We recommend that Kiribati rejoins the PPAWS funded by New Zealand and delivered by SPC. Other countries in PPAWS include the Cook Islands, Nauru, Niue, the Republic of Marshall Islands, Tokelau, Tonga and Tuvalu.
5. Under the PPAWS umbrella, Kiribati was part of two successive phases: the 2015-2019 NZ\$5 million programme 'Strengthening Water Security in Vulnerable Island States' and the closing 2019-2026 NZ\$19.9 million 'Managing Water Scarcity' programme.
6. s6(a)
7. Kiribati has delivered very good results through the first two PPAWS phases with 15,000 people in remote outer island communities directly benefitting through a range of initiatives including:
 - new and repaired rainwater harvesting systems;
 - new groundwater installations and desalination units providing drinking water;
 - installation of solar pumps;
 - water quality testing;
 - water resource assessments and community water management planning;
 - outer island water technician training; and
 - drought management planning at the national and community levels including supporting the response to the three years of water shortage during the extended 2020-2023 La Niña period.

Increased funding for Pacific water security activities

8. Kiribati will complete work on the current second phase of PPAWS by mid-2026. The Ministry has earmarked NZ\$1.8 million from within existing IDC baselines for Kiribati to join the third phase of the atoll water security programme.
9. If approved, this will increase the total value of the regional Strengthening Water Resilience activity to NZ\$20.55 million. An activity of this size falls within the delegation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Activity: Reduce Risk of Water Scarcity – Solar Still Distillation

10. The Ministry has funded Engineers Without Borders New Zealand (EWBNZ) as part of the Reduce Risk of Water Scarcity activity to deliver a solar still distillation (SSD) project in the Cook Islands, Kiribati, and Tuvalu. The project is in response to ongoing droughts impacting the supply of clean drinking water in the Southern Gilbert group of Kiribati, outer islands of Tuvalu, and Northern Cook Islands. SSD is a low-tech solar-powered method that produces safe, high-quality potable water from any raw feedwater source.
11. Tuvalu is extremely vulnerable to sea level rise, storm surges and drought impacting health and livelihoods. Strengthening water security and resilience are key priorities for the Government of Tuvalu as outlined in *Te Kete*, Tuvalu's National Strategy for Sustainable Development 2021 – 2030.
12. SSD installation is complete in Kiribati and 50 percent complete in Tuvalu and the Cook Islands. The Cook Islands is scheduled for completion by mid-2026, within the existing activity budget. Recipient communities in the three countries report positive impacts.
13. The remaining installations in Tuvalu are in remote locations. These installations have been delayed and cannot be completed within existing budgets due to cost increases to shipping, local partner costs, and technical challenges outside the control of EWBNZ, for example:
 - Inter-island shipping costs have increased significantly, exacerbated by reduced capacity in the last year and schedules disrupted by vessel reliability and weather impacts.
 - The EWBNZ local non-government partner, Fuligafou (Youth for Tuvalu), had planned to use local labour in each island's installation location. However, there has been a labour shortage due to the impact of seasonal worker schemes. As a result, installation teams are being sent from Funafuti at additional cost.
 - There are some additional site-specific challenges in Tuvalu that will incur additional cost. These include access to raw feedwater on Funafala and community stewardship on Nanumanga, where damage to panels has occurred.
14. The additional cost to complete installation of the remaining 60 SSD units in Tuvalu is NZ\$355,000. The SSD project is part of the regional Reduce Risk of Water Scarcity activity. This will increase the total value of this activity to NZ\$25,333,000. An activity of this size falls within the delegation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Resourcing

15. This funding will be sourced from the existing IDC Programme baseline. There are no other resourcing implications.

Released under the Official Information Act



15 December 2025

Minister of Foreign Affairs

For approval by 23 December 2025

Proliferation Security Initiative: Exercise Maru 2026

BRIEFING Overview Submission

PURPOSE To inform you of planning underway for New Zealand's hosting of a multi-national weapons of mass destruction counter-proliferation exercise and conference under the Proliferation Security Initiative, *Exercise Maru*, in November 2026.

Recommended referrals

Minister of Defence	For information by	16 January 2026
Minister of Customs	For information by	16 January 2026
Associate Minister of Transport	For information by	16 January 2026

Contact details

NAME	ROLE	DIVISION	WORK PHONE
Charlotte Beaglehole	Divisional Manager	International Security and Disarmament Division	s9(2)(a)
Nicola Reid	Unit Manager	International Security and Disarmament Division	

Minister's Office to complete

- | | | |
|--|---|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Approved | <input type="checkbox"/> Noted | <input type="checkbox"/> Referred |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Needs amendment | <input type="checkbox"/> Declined | <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Overtaken by events | <input type="checkbox"/> See Minister's notes | |

Comments

Proliferation Security Initiative: Exercise Maru 2026

Key points

- Established by the US in 2003, the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) is a voluntary grouping which aims to counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) through increased international cooperation. New Zealand is an endorsing state of the PSI and part of the Asia-Pacific Exercise Rotation (APER) group of countries that host annual exercises on a rotational basis. APER comprises Australia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Singapore, the US, and New Zealand.
- In 2020, Ministers agreed that New Zealand would defer its planned hosting in 2022 to a later date due to COVID-19 disruptions impacting APER rotational exercises.¹ It is now New Zealand's turn to host the 2026 APER exercise, referred to as *Exercise Maru 2026*. New Zealand last hosted Exercise Maru in September 2008 (Auckland) and November 2015 (Wellington). Exercise Maru 2026 follows Australia's hosting of *Exercise Pacific Protector* in September of 2024, and Japan's recent hosting of *Exercise Pacific Shield* from 2 - 4 December 2025.
- Planning, led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, with support from New Zealand Defence Force, Maritime New Zealand, the New Zealand Customs Service, and the Ministry of Defence, is underway for New Zealand to host Exercise Maru in November 2026 in Auckland over a two to four-day period between the dates of 16 and 20 November.
- Attendees of Exercise Maru 2026 could come from the 116 countries (see Annex One) who have endorsed the PSI and its interdiction principles, as well as countries that have not endorsed the PSI that New Zealand chooses to invite. Officials are planning for approximately 150 attendees. Attendees will include officials from a range of agencies responsible for WMD non-proliferation, military, and local embassies.
- These exercises typically include an academic session and live, port and tabletop exercises. APER countries will expect to be invited to bring assets, including military vehicles, to New Zealand to participate alongside NZDF in the live exercise, which will focus on countering a WMD-proliferation event.

s6(a)

- There are no resourcing implications as Exercise Maru 2026 can be funded through Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, New Zealand Defence Force, Customs, and Maritime New Zealand existing baselines.



Taha Macpherson
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade

¹ Submission to Minister of Foreign Affairs: *Proposal that New Zealand defer hosting Proliferation Security Initiative exercise until 2026*, INTS-36-372, dated 10 August 2020

Proliferation Security Initiative: Exercise Maru 2026

Recommendations

It is recommended that you:

- | | | |
|---|--|-----------------|
| 1 | Note that 2026 is New Zealand's turn to host and officials are undertaking planning to host Exercise Maru during November 2026 in Auckland with approximately 150 attendees expected. | Noted |
| 2 | Refer a copy of this submission to Minister of Defence, Minister of Customs, and Associate Minister of Transport for information. | Yes / No |

Rt Hon Winston Peters
Minister of Foreign Affairs

Date: / /

Released under the Official Information Act

Proliferation Security Initiative: Exercise Maru 2026

Report

Background on the Proliferation Security Initiative

1. The PSI is a voluntary international effort established primarily by the US in 2003 to prevent the illegal trade of WMD and related materials. The PSI was developed following the detection of a ship transporting missiles from North Korea to Yemen in late 2002. All PSI states endorse the Statement of Interdiction Principles. In doing so, they commit to participate in coordinated activities to impede and prevent WMD trafficking.
2. New Zealand is also a member of the 21-state PSI Operational Experts Group (OEG) which functions as the secretariat and governance body for the PSI. A new alphabetised approach to allocating annual hosting responsibility between the OEG means that New Zealand will not be required to host this meeting alongside Exercise Maru in 2026, however it will be expected to do so in 2035.
3. In addition, New Zealand is a member of the Asia-Pacific-Exercise Rotation (APER), along with Australia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Singapore, and the US. The APER conduct annual exercises on a rotational basis encompassing a range of live, port, and tabletop exercises and academic sessions focused on WMD non-proliferation. New Zealand last hosted Exercise Maru in 2015 in Wellington, and prior to that in 2008 in Auckland.
4. New Zealand was due to host Exercise Maru in 2022, however Ministers agreed to postpone until 2026 to allow the US to host Exercise Fortune Guard in 2022 (due to be held in 2020 but cancelled due to COVID-19 disruptions). The US remains heavily engaged in the PSI, including under the new Administration, and is strongly supported by Australia.

Early planning for Exercise Maru 2026

5. APER exercises are made up of standard components and over a two to four-day period Exercise Maru is planned to include:
 - 5.1. An academic session focused on counter-proliferation occurring in Auckland with New Zealand, APER, PSI-endorsing states, and non-government speakers.
 - 5.2. A tabletop exercise to enable participants to discuss best practice to respond to a hypothetical WMD proliferation event.
 - 5.3. A port exercise in Auckland or a non-port location to demonstrate how New Zealand would respond to a WMD proliferation event if discovered at a port location.
 - 5.4. A live exercise, likely observed from Devonport Naval Base, to demonstrate a live interdiction involving NZDF responding to intelligence that a vessel is illegally transporting WMD.
 - 5.5. A welcome reception for participants with an opening speech, possibly by a Minister (if available given the event's possible proximity to the General Election).
6. Officials are engaging with NZTE to consider opportunities for showcasing the New Zealand defence industry during Exercise Maru, noting however that most attendees will be mid-level officials without responsibility for significant defence procurement decisions.
7. In addition to inviting the 116 PSI countries and relevant international organisations (such as the World Customs Organisation) New Zealand will invite and likely fund attendance by some

Proliferation Security Initiative: Exercise Maru 2026

non-PSI Pacific Island countries. The purpose of their inclusion will be to grow Pacific capacity to identify and respond to proliferation incidents in their region. New Zealand is seeking to broaden the scope of the PSI to enhance its relevance for our region. This might see inclusion of new elements in the exercises and academic presentations, like the use of shipping registries and flags of convenience, tracking the financing, and the implications of emerging technology. Furthermore, we will highlight that the process followed to interdict vessels, either in port or at sea, is commodity agnostic and will be similar whether carrying WMD or narcotics.

Exercise Maru 2026 risks

8. Given the rotational approach, there is a strong expectation from APER countries that New Zealand will host Exercise Maru in 2026. s6(a)

9. There are also risks for New Zealand's reputation among PSI attendees at Exercise Maru 2026 if the exercise does not meet expectations. Officials are mitigating this risk by engaging on inter-agency planning early to ensure that all standard elements of APER exercises are included in Exercise Maru 2026 to a good standard. We are also working closely with Australia and the US.

10. Officials are planning for Exercise Maru to occur in November 2026. While during New Zealand's General Election period, this was assessed as the most suitable period to allow for appropriate NZDF participation in the live exercise component, s6(a)

Given APER exercises do not usually include ministerial participation – except where possible, at an opening event - officials assess that this will not present significant issues.

11. APER countries expect to be invited to participate in the live exercise through the provision of assets, including military vehicles. Australia's live exercise in 2024 included participation from Japan's Maritime Self-Defence Force, Republic of Korea's Navy and Coast Guard, the Singapore Armed Forces, and the US Navy and Coast Guard alongside the Australia Defence Force; in the recent Exercise Pacific Shield in Japan, US, Australian, and Republic of Korea personnel, as well as a US ship, *USS Higbee*, operated alongside the Japanese Self Defence Force. Given the visibility of these military assets, officials will develop a domestic public communications plan to ensure the public is well informed about the non-proliferation objective of the exercise. New Zealand will also likely release a joint statement on behalf of APER countries, as well as a press release on the exercise. Media may be invited to view some aspects of the exercise.

12. Visits by foreign military or state vessels and aircraft require diplomatic clearance from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. In addition, under the New Zealand Nuclear Free Zone, Disarmament, and Arms Control Act 1987, the entry of a foreign warship into New Zealand's internal waters or the landing of a foreign military aircraft requires the Prime Minister's approval. This approval may only be granted if the Prime Minister is satisfied that the vessel or aircraft is not carrying any nuclear explosive device. Officials will ensure that APER countries intending to participate in the live exercise are aware of, and comply with, these requirements.

Resourcing

13. There are no resource implications as Exercise Maru 2026 can be funded through MFAT, NZDF, Customs, and Maritime New Zealand existing baselines.

Proliferation Security Initiative: Exercise Maru 2026

Annex One: States that have endorsed the Proliferation Security Initiative Statement of Interdiction Principles

1. Afghanistan
2. Albania
3. Andorra
4. Angola
5. Antigua and Barbuda
6. Argentina
7. Armenia
8. Australia
9. Austria
10. Azerbaijan
11. Bahamas
12. Bahrain
13. Belarus
14. Belgium
15. Belize
16. Benin
17. Bosnia and Herzegovina
18. Brunei Darussalam
19. Bulgaria
20. Cambodia
21. Canada
22. Chile
23. Colombia
24. Croatia
25. Cyprus
26. Czech Republic
27. Denmark
28. Djibouti
29. Dominica
30. Dominican Republic
31. El Salvador
32. Equatorial Guinea
33. Estonia
34. Fiji
35. Finland
36. France
37. Georgia
38. Germany
39. Ghana
40. Greece
41. Guinea-Bissau
42. Holy See
43. Honduras
44. Hungary
45. Iceland
46. Iraq
47. Ireland
48. Israel
49. Italy
50. Japan
51. Jordan
52. Kazakhstan
53. Korea, South
54. Kuwait
55. Kyrgyzstan
56. Latvia
57. Liberia
58. Libya
59. Liechtenstein
60. Lithuania
61. Luxembourg
62. Madagascar
63. Malaysia
64. Malta
65. Marshall Islands
66. Micronesia, The Federated States of
67. Moldova
68. Mongolia
69. Montenegro
70. Morocco
71. Netherlands
72. New Zealand
73. Nigeria
74. North Macedonia
75. Norway
76. Oman
77. Palau
78. Panama
79. Papua New Guinea
80. Paraguay
81. Philippines
82. Poland
83. Portugal
84. Qatar
85. Romania
86. Samoa
87. San Marino
88. Saudi Arabia
89. Serbia
90. Singapore
91. Slovakia
92. Slovenia
93. Spain
94. Sri Lanka
95. St Lucia
96. St Vincent and the Grenadines
97. Sweden
98. Switzerland
99. Tajikistan
100. Thailand
101. The Gambia
102. Togo
103. Tonga
104. Trinidad and Tobago
105. Tunisia
106. Türkiye
107. Turkmenistan
108. Ukraine
109. United Arab Emirates
110. United Kingdom
111. United States of America
112. Uzbekistan
113. Vanuatu
114. Vietnam
115. Yemen
116. Zambia