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SOUTH PACIFIC DEFENCE MINISTERS' MEETING

Viña del Mar, Chile, 22-24 October 2025

JOINT COMMUNIQUE

Defence Ministers or their representatives from Australia, Chile, Fiji, France, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Tonga gathered in Viña del Mar for the 10th South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting (SPDMM) from 22 to 24 October 2025. They were joined by observers from Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States. Mr Baron Waqa, Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum, attended as a special guest.

The SPDMM is the premier defence ministerial dialogue in the South Pacific, enhancing cooperation and driving Pacific-led responses to shared regional security challenges since 2013. Members discussed new trends in security challenges facing the region and reaffirmed the importance of operational collaboration between their militaries in promoting a secure and resilient region. Members recommitted to enhance cooperation to jointly respond to climate-induced disasters, meet the increased demand for rapid and effective Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief response, and address non-traditional maritime security threats, including transnational organised crime.

Members thanked representatives from the Republic of Fiji Military Forces and the Papua New Guinea Defence Force for delivering the annual intelligence brief on behalf of the Oceania Directorates of Military Intelligence Meeting (ODMIM). The brief covered concurrency challenges to pacific security out to 2030.

Interoperability and Collective Action

Members reflected on the founding of the Pacific Response Group (PRG) and considered lessons learned from its first year of operation, following its endorsement at SPDMM 2024. They welcomed the update from the inaugural Commander of the Pacific Response Group, and noted that it had been used as part of Operation VANUATU ASSIST in December 2024, and participated in regional exercises including CROIX DU SUD and LONGREACH. Members endorsed the second phase of the PRG, and agreed to move to year round co-location of the PRG, with New Zealand taking over command and hosting the headquarters from 1 July 2026. Members tasked their Chiefs and Heads of Defence to explore options to broaden the mandate of the PRG from Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response to include stabilisation operations, including any necessary legal frameworks. Members also tasked Chiefs and Heads of Defence to explore options to establish a PRG-led exercise, taking into account the existing cycle of exercises and activities in the POVAI ENDEAVOUR Framework.

Members tasked the Secretariat to work with the Intersessional Working Group to commence consultations on a SPDMM Status of Forces Agreement, and to report back in 2026.

Members thanked Papua New Guinea for its report on the Joint Heads of Pacific Security meeting that it hosted in March 2025 and requested that they continue to be updated on relevant developments, particularly the Regional Operations Deployment Framework.

Members endorsed a SPDMM Information Sharing Framework, led by France, which formalises how and what information is exchanged between and among SPDMM Members, the Secretariat, observers and third parties. Members reflected on the benefits of greater interoperability through more consistent information sharing.

Members agreed to explore options to establish Chile's proposed biennial exercise Taina Vaikava commencing in 2027-2028 in Rapa Nui. Members asked Chile to keep members updated through the Intersessional Working Group.

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Maritime security

Members welcomed the presentation from Chile on transnational organised crime focused on the illegal drug trade from South America into the Pacific and reflected on the opportunity to benefit from Chile's view of the Pacific from the east looking west. To that end, Members committed to ensuring comprehensive maritime security, and encouraged the South West Pacific Heads of Maritime Forces Meeting to implement an intelligence-led operation focused on transnational organised crime. They noted opportunities for Parties to better utilise the *Niue Treaty Subsidiary Agreement* for broader law enforcement purposes. Members welcomed Fiji's offer to make use of the Vuale Maritime Essential Services Centre as a regional asset. Members tasked the Secretariat to prepare a stocktake on regional cooperation in the maritime domain.

Members noted the completed stocktake of existing SPDMM ship-riding cooperation commissioned by ministers at SPDMM 2024. Members tasked the Secretariat to disseminate the stocktake to relevant regional organisations to enhance coordination and information-sharing across regional architecture.

Training and academic network

Members welcomed the official launch of SPDMM's Academic Cooperation Network (ACN), including [its first publication](#), peer reviewed by the SPDMM membership, which considered the implications of climate change on the security of South Pacific countries. Members welcomed the ACN's potential to enhance cooperation and networks between academic defence institutions and national security researchers focused on the South Pacific and thanked Chile for its leadership on this initiative. Members tasked the Intersessional Working Group and the Secretariat to identify additional research topics for the ACN and thanked Chile for continuing to lead the next ACN project.

Members welcomed the launch of the interactive SPDMM Regional Training Framework, an online platform designed to improve coordination of individual training courses available to personnel across the SPDMM community. Recognising that climate change was the greatest existential threat to Pacific security, members agreed to explore Fiji's proposals to establish an environmental sustainability module within the Regional Training Framework and a climate, peace and security adviser position within SPDMM to provide advice to member countries.

People-to-People Links

Noting the upcoming 25th anniversary of the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), members reflected on women's leadership and contributions to the development of inclusive responses to regional security challenges. Members welcomed the fact that the SPDMM Governance Framework includes WPS as a standing agenda item. Members also welcomed the fact that all members of the PRG had qualified as Gender Focal Point officers during its first year of operation. Members tasked the Secretariat and IWG to develop a SPDMM WPS Guidance Note for consideration at SPDMM 2026.

Members thanked Australia for hosting the second Pacific Defence Faith Forum in Canberra from 29 March to 3 April 2025. Members welcomed the continued growth of the Pacific Defence Faith Network, underpinned by people-to-people connections and faith-based engagement between Pacific militaries, enhancing regional capacity, interoperability and trust. Members noted the Network's value in amplifying the impact of other SPDMM initiatives through sustained engagement, including most notably with the Pacific Response Group. They thanked Fiji for offering to host the next forum in 2026.

Members thanked Australia for hosting the fourth Future Leaders' Summit in Brisbane from 14 to 16 May 2025. The Summit brought together young civilian and military leaders from all SPDMM countries as well as representatives from the Pacific Fusion Centre to connect and explore how military and civilian partnerships promote regional resilience. Members welcomed Fiji's offer to host the next summit in 2027.

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Coordinating with regional architecture

Members conveyed their sincere appreciation to the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Secretary General, Mr Waqa, for attending the meeting as a special guest for the second time. Members valued the regional perspective Mr Waqa had brought to the discussions at SPDMM and agreed to consider his suggestion of embedding a Defence Adviser from a SPDMM member country into the PIF Secretariat to strengthen linkages between SPDMM and the PIF Secretariat, and to foster collective cooperation. Recognising that regional cohesion and solidarity has never been more important, Members reaffirmed their commitment to regular mutual exchanges between the PIF architecture and the SPDMM, and agreed to extend an invitation to attend SPDMM 2026.

Members thanked New Zealand for its leadership on better coordinating regional defence architecture, noted its stocktake on regional defence meetings and tasked New Zealand to work with the Secretariat and Intersessional Working Group to develop a coordination mechanism, leveraging existing structures, and to provide a progress update at SPDMM 2026.

Members thanked Chile for hosting SPDMM 2025 and agreed that Fiji would host SPDMM 2026.

For more information on SPDMM, please visit: [South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting](#).