



Headquarters
New Zealand Defence Force
Defence House
Private Bag 39997
Wellington Mail Centre
Lower Hutt 5045
New Zealand

OIA-2024-5059

12 July 2024

Valerie Morse
fyi-request-27297-1f0383d2@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Valerie Morse

I refer to your email of 19 June 2024 requesting *any information or advice to the Minister regarding NZ participation in RIMPAC 2024*. Your request has been considered in accordance with the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

The following information was provided by the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) to the Minister of Defence regarding Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) 2024. The information is provided as excerpts because other content in the documents in which this information was provided is out of scope of your request.

1. Excerpt from briefing provided to the Minister of Defence on 7 June 2024 prior to the Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade Committee hearing on 18 June 2024:

RIMPAC

Key Messages

- *The New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) has been involved in the RIMPAC (Rim of the Pacific) exercise since the 1970s and will participate again this year.*
- *RIMPAC is the world's largest maritime warfare exercise. It is a US-hosted maritime, air and land exercise involving ships, aircraft and land forces of many countries. The RIMPAC exercise supports the international rules-based system.*
- *This year's exercise, running from June 26 to August 2, will be hosted by US Pacific Fleet and led by Commander US Third Fleet and involves approximately 29 nations, and includes 40 surface ships, three submarines, the land forces of 14 countries, and more than 150 aircraft. Approximately 25,000 personnel are involved.*
- *The NZDF is deploying the Royal New Zealand Navy's (RNZN) maritime replenishment vessel HMNZS AOTEAROA, which will have an embarked Seasprite helicopter, a Royal New Zealand Air Force P-8A Poseidon and RNZN divers from HMNZS MATATAUA. Approximately 250 NZDF personnel are deploying to the exercise. Some NZDF personnel will be based in the RIMPAC command headquarters. RNZN personnel will be commanding Combined Task Force 173, a task force of eight ships and embarked helicopters. This is only the second time this task force has been commanded by a country other than the US.*

- *The exercise is an opportunity for NZDF personnel to participate and gain experience with other militaries. Interoperability and familiarity with how other militaries work is an important objective of such exercises. Such familiarity can be valuable, for example, when we work alongside each other on a range of operations, such as maritime interdiction operations in the region.*
- *Questions about Israel's involvement in RIMPAC should be directed to the US military.*

2. Weekly report items submitted to the Minister of Defence:

Defence Weekly Report (8-14 February 2024)

Operations and Training

Exercise Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC)

List of 3 items

1. RIMPAC continues as the world's largest joint and combined maritime exercise. This exercise remains vitally important for the development of integrated, interoperable and well-prepared partners who have shared interest in enduring peace and stability throughout the Indo-Pacific Region. The exercise provides an opportunity for social and professional interactions with like-minded partners across the air, land and maritime domains.

2. A major event in the RIMPAC 2024 planning process is the Commander's Conference. The conference provides an opportunity for the RIMPAC 2024 Executive Steering Committee and key staff to review major aspects of the exercise such as concept of operations, operational risk management and environmental issues.

The conference also provides an appropriate setting to interact socially in support of establishing solid working relationships and friendships prior to the exercise.

3. The Commander's Conference will see over 100 delegates converge on Wellington over the period 19-23 February. The Commander's Conference will be hosted by the Commander Third Fleet, Admiral Boyle with the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) represented by Commander Joint Forces New Zealand, Rear Admiral Jim Gilmour.

Defence Weekly Report (6-12 June 2024)

Operation CRUCIBLE: Further to the submission of 29 April, Operation Crucible 2024 will commence this month with participation in the Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercise. RIMPAC is the world's largest international maritime exercise, spanning all maritime based warfare disciplines. It is set in a coalition environment that includes live firing and specialist serials, such as amphibious training and integration with advanced littoral (ship to shore) capabilities.

Exercise RIMPAC 24 includes a series of combined live Field Training Exercises, conducted in the operating areas of the Hawaiian Islands. The exercise will be hosted by the United States Navy during the period 27 June-1 August. (U)

2. The objective of New Zealand participation in RIMPAC 24 is to enhance New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) interoperability through the deployment of NZDF force elements and the augmentation of key headquarters staff positions to improve overall individual and collective readiness. The NZDF contribution to RIMPAC 24 will include HMNZS

Aotearoa, an operational dive team from HMNZS Matataua, a national command and support element, a range of staff augmentees and a P-8A Poseidon aircraft detachment. Aotearoa will deploy on 13 June. (U)

3. Operational update on HMNZS Aotearoa dated 29 April 2024, provided to the Minister of Defence on 1 May 2024:

3. Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) is the world's largest international maritime warfare exercise. It is held biennially and hosted and administered by the United States Navy's Third Fleet. There are 30 nations planned to participate in RIM PAC 2024 including our close partners Australia, Canada, the US, the UK and Tonga.

In addition, please find enclosed copies of email correspondence between the NZDF and the Office of the Minister of Defence. Where indicated, personal information is withheld to protect privacy in accordance with section 9(2)(a) of the OIA; and information concerning the provision of advice is withheld to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs in accordance with section 9(2)(g)(i) of the OIA.

You have the right, under section 28(3) of the OIA, to ask an Ombudsman to review this response to your request. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that responses to official information requests are proactively released where possible. This response to your request will be published shortly on the NZDF website.

Yours sincerely

AJ WOODS

Air Commodore

Chief of Staff HQNZDF

Enclosure:

1. Email correspondence between NZDF and Office of the Minister of Defence