

**STATEMENT OF INTENT ON DEFENCE COOPERATION**  
**BETWEEN**  
**REPUBLIC OF FIJI AND NEW ZEALAND**  
**2022 - 2025**

This Statement of Intent, which sets out the priorities for defence cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Fiji and the Government of New Zealand, and reaffirms our joint commitment as security partners in the region.

Ministers re-affirm that Fiji and New Zealand share a close bilateral defence relationship, based on valued people-to-people links, strong historical ties, and a shared vision for a secure, stable and resilient Pacific region for current and future generations. The Republic of Fiji Military Forces and the New Zealand Defence Force have been training together since the 1970s and have deployed together in a range of theatres including the Pacific and the Middle East, in support of peace, stability, resilience, and the international rules-based system.

The relationship is guided by the *New Zealand – Fiji Statement of Partnership 2022 – 2025 (Duavata Partnership)* which affirms the joint ambition to elevate the Fiji-New Zealand relationship to a new level of expanded strategic cooperation in the years to come based on a foundation of shared values, equal partnership, and achieved through trust and consultation.

Fiji and New Zealand recognise the intensifying regional security challenges the Pacific is facing, including the impacts of climate change, transnational organised crime, and maritime security challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic has intensified these challenges.

Fiji and New Zealand are committed to active engagement in support of regional security architecture, including initiatives established under the South Pacific Defence Ministers Meeting.

In responding to these challenges, we are guided by the *Boe Declaration on Regional Security*, which recognises an expanded concept of security and affirms that climate change remains the single greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and wellbeing of the Pacific. We continue to work together to better understand the security implications of climate change, which are already being felt acutely in the Pacific.

Fiji and New Zealand remain committed to coordinating our responses to challenges in the region, in line with the *Biketawa Declaration*, which remains of paramount importance. The Ministers reaffirmed the principle that in a time of crisis, a threat to security, or in response to a request for assistance, Pacific Island countries will first seek support from their extended Pacific family and Pacific Islands Forum members to coordinate a regional response.

To support the increased level of cooperation, Fijian and New Zealand officials will bring into force a reciprocal Status of Forces Agreement, which will provide a legal framework for presence of forces in their states' respective territories.

### **Priority Areas of Cooperation**

To further these shared objectives Ministers confirmed that Fiji and New Zealand will, over the period 2022 to 2025, place emphasis on the following aspects of their defence relationship:

- **Capacity Development and Training of Defence Personnel**
  - Fostering increasingly meaningful connections between our peoples and defence organisations through avenues such as personnel exchanges and secondments;
  - Developing greater connections and dialogue between Fiji's Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration and New Zealand's Ministry of Defence;
  - Pursuing greater understanding and coordination on our respective defence priorities including on force regeneration plans post COVID-19;
- **Maritime Security**
  - Working together with regional partners to address shared maritime challenges;
  - Sharing experiences to better understand shared maritime challenges, including as we progress our respective Maritime Security Strategies;
- **Collective Disaster and Humanitarian Response Coordination**
  - Working together to improve regional coordination and capacity in responding to humanitarian crises and natural disasters including through learning from each other's experience in response to events as they emerge;
  - Engaging with other members of the South Pacific Defence Ministers Meeting to develop the regional response to humanitarian and disaster response.

This Statement of Intent and progress towards priority areas of cooperation will be reviewed annually at the Fiji – New Zealand Bilateral Defence Talks.

Hon Pio Tikoduadua  
Minister for Home Affairs and Immigration  
Republic of Fiji

Hon Andrew Little  
Minister of Defence  
New Zealand