

HON JUDITH COLLINS KC, MINISTER OF DEFENCE

NEW ZEALAND ASSISTANCE TO UKRAINE: PROPOSED EVOLUTION OF NEW ZEALAND DEFENCE FORCE DEPLOYMENT APPROVED IN FEBRUARY 2024

December 2024

This publication provides the June 2024 briefing from the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF), Ministry of Defence (MOD) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) to the Minister of Defence and the Minister of Foreign Affairs seeking approval for the following:

- changes to the NZDF deployment, in support of Ukraine's self-defence, being an approval for an NZDF contribution to a newly-established North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) effort, and
- an expansion of training focus areas for the deployment.

The pack comprises the following submission:

- Briefing by the NZDF, MOD, and MFAT to the Minister of Defence and the Minister of Foreign Affairs: *New Zealand Assistance to Ukraine: Proposed Evolution of New Zealand Defence Force Deployment Approved in February 2024*

This pack has been released on the Ministry of Defence website, available at: www.defence.govt.nz/publications/new-zealand-assistance-to-ukraine-proposed-evolution-of-new-zealand-defence-force-deployment-approved-in-february-2024

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Information is withheld where making it available would be likely to prejudice:

- the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the Government of New Zealand [section 6(a)]
- the entrusting of information to the Government of New Zealand on the basis of confidence by the Government of any other country [section 6(b)(i)].

Information is also withheld in order to:

- maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by or between or to Ministers of the Crown or members of an organisation or officers and employees of any department or organisation in the course of their duty [section 9(2)(g)(i)]
- maintain legal professional privilege [section 9(2)(h)]



092-2024

5 June 2024

Minister of Foreign Affairs
Minister of Defence

NEW ZEALAND ASSISTANCE TO UKRAINE: PROPOSED EVOLUTION OF NEW ZEALAND DEFENCE FORCE DEPLOYMENT APPROVED IN FEBRUARY 2024

Purpose

1. To seek your approval for two changes to the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) deployment, in support of Ukraine's self-defence, being an approval for an NZDF contribution to a newly-established North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) effort, and an expansion of training focus areas for the deployment.

Executive Summary

2. In February 2024, Cabinet agreed to extend the NZDF's deployment in support of Ukraine until 30 June 2025 [CAB-24-MIN-0040]. This NZDF deployment is referred to as Operation TIEKE.
3. International efforts to support Ukraine's self-defence have continued to evolve in response to Russia's ongoing aggression in Ukraine. Accordingly, this paper recommends that Ministers approve two changes to the previously agreed Operation TIEKE mandate.

Training

4. This paper firstly recommends that the Minister of Defence approve further iterations of basic infantry training to be delivered by the NZDF to the Armed Forces of Ukraine, [REDACTED] s6(b)(i) This would be in addition to the training focus areas approved by Cabinet for Operation TIEKE 2024/2025, but would not exceed the approved 97 deployed personnel limit. Under the Operation TIEKE mandate [CAB-MIN-0040], the Minister of Defence has authority to authorise the additional training in this area.

Logistics – NATO Security and Assistance Training – Ukraine

5. This paper also recommends that Ministers approve a New Zealand contribution to a new NATO security coordination effort known as NATO Security and Assistance Training - Ukraine (NSATU). This will replace some of the functions of the current [REDACTED] s6(a) which coordinates the delivery of

assistance from partners to Ukraine. Contributing to this effort will enable the NZDF to continue to support logistics efforts [redacted s6(a)] already mandated as part of Operation TIEKE 2024/2025.

6. There are notable benefits to New Zealand in supporting NATO to take a leadership role in coordinating and delivering security and training assistance for Ukraine, and in agreeing to offer further iterations of basic infantry training support to the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Contributing to a NATO-led effort, [redacted s6(b)(i)]; will strengthen relationships with NATO and with Ukraine by demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness to evolving efforts to support Ukraine to counter ongoing Russian aggression.

7. [redacted s6(a)]

Training Assistance Update: Additional Focus Area of Basic Infantry Training

8. In February 2024, Cabinet delegated authority to the Minister of Defence to authorise training outside the six agreed focus areas for the deployment mandate through until 30 June 2025, if training needs evolved.

9. [redacted s6(b)(i)], in addition to the six Cabinet-approved focus areas, New Zealand also offer further iterations of basic infantry training courses to the Armed Forces of Ukraine personnel in the UK (in a continuation of assistance offered under previous deployments). [redacted s6(b)(i)]

10. Approval is sought from the Minister of Defence for the NZDF to deliver basic infantry training as an additional focus area as part of Operation TIEKE 2024/2025, within the 97 person cap set out in the deployment mandate approved by Cabinet.

Establishment of NATO Security and Assistance Training – Ukraine (NSATU)

11. The conflict in Ukraine continues to evolve, and so to do the international structures that have been developed to provide the most effective and coherent assistance to Ukraine, in support of its self-defence.

12. The evolution of the role of NATO is one example. NATO Foreign Ministers agreed in April that NATO would take over the coordination of security assistance and training for Ukraine.¹ [redacted s6(a)]

[redacted s9(2)(g)(i)]

¹ [redacted s9(2)(g)(i)]

13. To operationalise this role change, NATO is developing the NSATU. In the first instance, NSATU will assume specifically some of the donor and training coordination functions of the [redacted] s6(a) logistics node for coordinating the delivery of assistance from partners to Ukraine. [redacted] s6(a)

Implications, benefits and risks for existing NZDF deployments

14. In February 2024, Cabinet agreed to extend the deployment of up to 97 NZDF personnel deployed in support of Ukraine, within the themes of intelligence, liaison, logistics, training, command and administration, until 30 June 2025 [CAB-24-MIN-0040]. This NZDF deployment in support of Ukraine is referred to as Operation TIEKE.

15. Under the logistics limb of Operation TIEKE 2024/2025, New Zealand is mandated to maintain a contribution of up to six personnel [redacted] s6(a) to coordinate the delivery of assistance to Ukraine.

16. NATO's Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe has requested that New Zealand continue to provide personnel [redacted] s6(a) once it transitions under NSATU leadership. s6(b)(i)

17. NSATU's assumption of responsibility [redacted] s6(a) is anticipated to take place before the end of 2024. We do not anticipate that the transition to NATO Command will impact [redacted] s6(a) the tasks currently carried out by NZDF personnel. However, if New Zealand wishes to continue in positions [redacted] s6(a) under the NATO Command from the changeover date, New Zealand will need to become a NATO operational partner for NSATU.

18. Becoming an operational partner is not a new process for New Zealand. New Zealand is already an operational partner for SEA GUARDIAN – NATO's maritime security mission in the Mediterranean and has previously been an operational partner for the Operation RESOLUTE SUPPORT MISSION in Afghanistan.

19. A decision to contribute to NSATU would have notable benefits. In particular, it would enable the NZDF to continue to provide much needed logistical assistance in support of Ukraine's self-defence, in line with Cabinet's direction for Operation TIEKE 2024/2025.

20. Participating in the NSATU would also demonstrate confidence by New Zealand in NATO taking up a strengthened role in coordinating assistance to Ukraine in order to counter Russian aggression, and would strengthen New Zealand's bilateral ties with NATO. Taking this step would also be a tangible contribution towards delivering on the 'Operations Preparation and Training' goal under the NATO-New Zealand partnership agreement, the Individually Tailored Partnership Programme, which was finalised on 24 May 2024.²

21. A New Zealand decision to contribute to NSATU [redacted] s6(a) and will likely contribute to the backdrop of New Zealand's Ukraine-focused

² Ministerial Submission *New Zealand and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO): Bilateral Partnership and Renewal of Formal Arrangements* of 29 January 2024 refers.

announcements, and engagements, at the NATO Leaders Summit in Washington in July.

22. s6(a)

23. s6(a)

24. On the basis of the opportunities presented above, approval is sought from Ministers for New Zealand to contribute to NSATU as a NATO operational partner.

Proposal to Maintain NZDF- NATO Liaison Support

25. In February 2024, Cabinet was provided advice which noted that on 30 June 2024, NZDF would dis-establish a liaison officer role at NATO's Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), as it was judged at the time that this was no longer required.

26. However, with NATO's assumption of a more significant role in coordinating support to Ukraine, officials assess that there remains value in retaining a liaison function with SHAPE until 30 June 2025, when the current mandate in support of Ukraine expires.

27. In line with CAB-24-MIN-0040, the CDF has authority, delegated by Cabinet, to manage the employment of up to 97 NZDF personnel deployed in support of Ukraine's self-defence across the suite of themes approved by Cabinet, including liaison support.

28. On that basis, if Ministers approve New Zealand's participation in NSATU, the CDF will authorise the maintenance of the liaison officer role at the Headquarters until 30 June 2025 and commence the process of re-deploying an officer into this role.

Threat Levels

29. New Zealand Defence Intelligence assess the threat to NZDF personnel operating in Europe (with the exception of Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia) as s6(a)

Legal Considerations

s9(2)(h)

Financial Considerations

33. Ministers will be updated on whether there are any financial implications from participation in NSATU, as discussions with officials progress. At this stage, financial implications are expected to be limited to those anticipated as part of Operation TIEKE 2024/2025.

Next Steps

NSATU

34. If Ministers agree in principle that New Zealand should participate in NSATU, officials will signal this positive intent to NATO, and the NZDF will conclude a legal agreement (known as Participation and Financial Agreement) with NATO confirming New Zealand's intention to contribute as an operational partner in this effort. Further advice to Ministers may be required to finalise these legal arrangements, and Ministers will be informed as legal discussions progress and if Cabinet approval is required.

35. Once the Participation and Financial Agreement is concluded, the North Atlantic Council will issue a NATO Executive Directive. s9(2)(g)(i)

36. Officials will prepare media material in support of this decision, for consideration as part of the Prime Minister's communications package for attendance at the NATO Summit in Washington.

Basic Infantry Training

37. If the Minister of Defence agrees that the NZDF should offer further basic infantry training to the Armed Forces of Ukraine, the NZDF will engage with partners to deliver this training as appropriate.

Recommendations

38. It is recommended that you:

- a. Note that in February 2024, Cabinet approved the deployment of up to 97 New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) personnel in support of Ukraine, within the themes of intelligence, liaison, logistics, training, command and administration, from 1 July 2024 until 30 June 2025.

Noted

- b. Note that this deployment mandate authorises up to six New Zealand Defence Force personnel to support s6(a)

Noted

- c. **Note** that NATO will establish the NATO Security Assistance and Training – Ukraine (NSATU), [REDACTED] s6(a) [REDACTED] by late 2024.

Noted

- d. **Agree** for New Zealand to contribute to the NSATU, enabling New Zealand to continue to contribute logistics support to Ukraine in line with the existing mandate.

Yes / No

- e. **Note** that the Chief of Defence Force will authorise the maintenance of a liaison officer position at NATO's Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, to enable continued information flow and situational awareness.

Noted

- f. **Note** that the February 2024 NZDF deployment mandate in support of Ukraine authorises New Zealand to provide training to the Armed Forces of Ukraine, across six focus areas for training support.

Noted

- g. **Note** that Cabinet delegated authority to the Minister of Defence to authorise training outside of these six focus areas, if training needs evolve.

Noted

- h. **Agree** for the NZDF to deliver training to the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the additional area of basic infantry training.

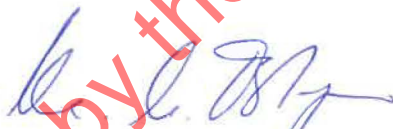
Yes / No

- i. **Refer** a copy of this submission to the Prime Minister for concurrence.

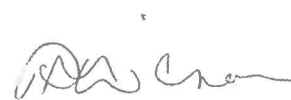
Yes / No



KR SHORT
Air Marshal
Chief of Defence Force
Date: 05 JUNE 2024



ANDREW BRIDGMAN
Secretary of Defence
Date: 5 June 2024



PAULA WILSON
Acting Deputy Chief
Executive – Policy
Date:

**RT HON WINSTON
PETERS**
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Date:

HON JUDITH COLLINS KC
Minister of Defence
Date:

**RT HON CHRISTOPHER
LUXON**
Prime Minister
Date: