

## **HON RON MARK, MINISTER OF DEFENCE**

### **Overview of Deployment Decisions**

October 2020

This publication provides documents which supported Cabinet's June 2020 decision to renew the mandates for New Zealand's contribution to peace support deployments in the Middle East and Africa to September 2022.

The pack comprises the following documents:

- the 23 June 2020 Cabinet minute: *Overview of Deployment Decisions* [ERS-20-MIN-0016]
- the redacted Cabinet paper: *Overview of Deployment Decisions* [ERS-20-SUB-0016].

This pack has been released on the Ministry of Defence website, available at: [www.defence.govt.nz/publications](http://www.defence.govt.nz/publications).

It has been necessary to withhold certain information in accordance with the following provisions of the Official Information Act 1982. Where information is withheld, the relevant sections of the Act are indicated in the body of the document. Where information has been withheld in accordance with section 9(2) of the Act, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.

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 constitutional conventions for the time being which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials [section 9(2)(f)(iv)]
- 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)]



# Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee

## Minute of Decision

*This document contains information for the New Zealand Cabinet. It must be treated in confidence and handled in accordance with any security classification, or other endorsement. The information can only be released, including under the Official Information Act 1982, by persons with the appropriate authority.*

### Overview of Deployment Decisions

**Portfolios** Foreign Affairs / Defence

On 23 June 2020, the Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee (ERS):

- 1 **noted** that at its meeting on 23 June 2020, ERS will be considering <sup>s6(a)</sup> deployment papers (the <sup>s6(a)</sup> proposals);
- 2 **noted** that the <sup>s6(a)</sup> proposals contribute to multilateral peace support operations, enable New Zealand contributions in the Middle East and Africa, <sup>s9(2)(f)(iv)</sup>
- 3 **noted** that New Zealand's mandated deployment numbers are currently at their lowest point since 2013;
- 4 **noted** that the <sup>s6(a)</sup> proposals can be undertaken without affecting the ability of the New Zealand Defence Force to meet standing obligations within the Pacific, or emergency responses;
- 5 **noted** that all costs would be met within existing baseline for Vote Defence Force: Operations Contributing to New Zealand's Security, Stability and Interests, and that no funding is being requested.

Janine Harvey  
Committee Secretary

**Present:**

Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern  
Rt Hon Winston Peters (Chair)  
Hon Kelvin Davis  
Hon Grant Robertson  
Hon Andrew Little  
Hon David Parker  
Hon Ron Mark

**Officials present from:**

Office of the Prime Minister  
Officials Committee for OERS

**Hard-copy distribution:**

Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Minister of Defence

Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Office of the Minister of Defence  
Chair, External Relations and Security Committee

## OVERVIEW OF DEPLOYMENT DECISIONS

### Proposal

1. To provide an overview of the s6(a) deployment decisions presented to Cabinet for consideration in June 2020.

### Relation to government priorities

2. These deployments in the Middle East, Africa and s9(2)(f)(iv) regions directly contribute to the government's priority *to create an international reputation we can be proud of*. By addressing international security issues through multilateral frameworks, these deployments also support the maintenance of the international rules-based order, which is fundamental to New Zealand's national security interests and foreign policy objectives.

### Overview of deployment decisions

3. This paper provides context for the s6(a) deployment Cabinet papers presented for consideration in June 2020:
  - Proposal to renew the mandate for New Zealand's contribution to the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO)
  - Proposal to renew the mandate for New Zealand's contribution to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)
  - Proposal to renew the mandate for New Zealand's contribution to the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO)

s6(a), s6(b)(i), s9(2)(f)(iv)

4. The papers were scheduled to be considered over the May, June and July period, but are all now presented in June due to adjustments to the Cabinet Committee schedule in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the upcoming General Election.
5. For background on advice to Cabinet on defence deployments refer Annex A: 'New Zealand Defence deployments: a process overview'.

### *MFO, UNMISS, UNTSO: contributing to multilateral peace support operations*

6. The first three papers propose the renewal of New Zealand's well-established contributions to multilateral peace support efforts in the Middle East and Africa. Cabinet is asked to consider:
  - Extending the mandate for New Zealand's 28 positions in MFO for two years and approving surges of up to five personnel for up to six months;

- Extending the mandate for New Zealand's four positions in UNMISS for two years [redacted] s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i) and
- Extending the mandate for New Zealand's eight positions in UNTSO for two years.

[redacted] s6(a), s6(b)(i)

7. [redacted] s6(a), s6(b)(i)

- [redacted] s6(a), s6(b)(i)
- [redacted] s6(a), s6(b)(i)

[redacted] s9(2)(f)(iv)

8. [redacted] s9(2)(f)(iv)

- [redacted] s9(2)(f)(iv)
- [redacted] s9(2)(f)(iv)

**Comment**

*A collective signal of New Zealand's priorities and values*

9. Deploying NZDF personnel and assets to advance and promote New Zealand's national security interests (including defence and foreign policy interests) is one of the key strategic levers available to government within its suite of international engagement tools. Deployments are a tangible and often high-profile statement about New Zealand's values, priorities and interests.
10. The [redacted] s6(a) deployments under consideration send a clear and balanced message about New Zealand's international defence engagement: they illustrate our ongoing commitment to the international rules-based order and the value of multilateralism, as well as our willingness to play our part in addressing regional and global security issues. This message has particular resonance and value now, as varying international responses to COVID-19 risk undermining confidence in multilateral rules and institutions and diverting attention from long-standing security challenges.

<sup>1</sup> Mandates for New Zealand deployments to Afghanistan and OGP expire on 31 December 2020.

11. Among the reasons for renewing NZDF's mandates in MFO, UNMISS and UNTSO is the fact that these deployments represent the entirety of New Zealand's contribution to peace support operations (43 mandated positions in total). UNMISS and UNTSO also represent all of New Zealand's contribution to UN peacekeeping missions (12 mandated positions in total). As of February 2020, New Zealand was ranked 99th out of 126 UN Troop/Police Contributing Countries.<sup>2</sup> s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

[REDACTED]

Renewing commitments to UNMISS and MFO at this time would also demonstrate confidence in the leadership of two New Zealanders – David Shearer as UN Special Representative for South Sudan and Major General Evan Williams as MFO Force Commander.

12. s6(a), s6(b)(i)

[REDACTED]

13. s9(2)(f)(iv)

[REDACTED]

14. Renewing each of these deployments – and the messages they send regarding New Zealand's priorities and values – would be welcomed by our bilateral partners and the UN. As detailed in the respective Cabinet papers, renewing all s6(a) deployments would also support New Zealand's broader foreign policy objectives across bilateral and multilateral domains.

*Approving all s6(a) deployments is not a question of trade offs*

15. Because overall numbers of deployed NZDF personnel across these s6(a) deployments are low and costs would be met from NZDF baseline funding, the question of trade offs between the deployments does not arise.

16. s9(2)(g)(i)

[REDACTED]

<sup>2</sup> Based on actual numbers, as of February 2020. The Cabinet papers refer to mandated deployment numbers.

*And would not impact on our prioritisation of the Pacific region*

17. Approving all s6(a) deployments would not diminish the priority that Defence continues to place on contributing to stability in the Pacific region. The NZDF maintains constant readiness to respond to contingencies in and around New Zealand and in the Pacific. In line with this approach, s6(a) <sup>3</sup> Defence, alongside other agencies, is also considering how to further support Pacific partners to respond to COVID-19. Approving all s6(a) deployments would not affect Defence's ability to continue to do so.

*All s6(a) deployments have unique operational benefits*

18. For the NZDF, deployments provide essential opportunities to conduct military operations. Deployments test the NZDF's ability to operate and deliver a range of effects far from New Zealand's shores. They increase the ability of personnel and platforms to integrate with key partners and strengthen interoperability. Deployments to UNMISS and to UNTSO also provide experience on UN operations, an essential criterion for selection into senior UN deployed leadership positions, s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

*The deployments in context*

19. Over the course of 2020, the government will have considered the mandates of all but one of New Zealand's eleven offshore deployments.<sup>4</sup> The total number of NZDF personnel currently mandated to deploy on overseas operations is at its lowest point since 2013 following the successful completion of New Zealand's Building Partner Capacity Mission at Taji in Iraq and the streamlining of our contribution to NATO's Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan (refer table in Annex A: 'Numbers deployed over time: 2001 to present').

20. s9(2)(f)(iv) s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)



<sup>3</sup> In line with the Government's Strategic Defence Policy Statement 2018 and the Pacific Reset.

<sup>4</sup> In 2020, Cabinet has already considered papers relating to s6(a) contributions to the D-ISIS Coalition [CAB-20-MIN -0097]. Cabinet is scheduled to consider two deployments before the end of 2020: contributions to the multinational intelligence sharing platform Operation Gallant Phoenix and to NATO's Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan.

## Implications of COVID-19

21. New Zealand's broad approach to defence deployments remains unchanged, despite the uncertainty associated with the COVID-19 pandemic affecting all international missions.<sup>5</sup> However, all deployment advice includes an element of flexibility that enables the NZDF to respond and adjust to restrictions and mitigate risk.

## Financial implications

22. Costs associated with these deployments would be met within existing baseline for Vote Defence Force: Operations Contributing to New Zealand's Security, Stability and Interests. These s6(a) deployments, alongside New Zealand's ongoing contributions to the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS and Maritime Security in the Middle East, which Cabinet approved earlier this year, comprise s6(a), s9(2)(f)(iv) Departmental Output Expenses for Military Operations in Support of the Rules-Based Order for 2020/21. Funding for these deployments would not draw on the Tagged Operating Contingency, which was established as part of Budget 2017 and expired in FY19/20 (the balance of that fund was used for mandate renewals approved in 2019).

## Consultation

23. This paper has been prepared by the Ministry of Defence, the New Zealand Defence Force and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (NAB, NSG, and PAG), s6(a) and the Treasury were consulted.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

24. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence recommend that the Committee:
  1. **Note** that s6(a) deployment Cabinet papers are presented to Cabinet in June due to adjustments to the Cabinet Committee schedule in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the upcoming General Election;
  2. **Note** that the proposals contribute to multilateral peace support operations, enable New Zealand contributions in the Middle East and Africa, s9(2)(f)(iv)
  3. **Note** that New Zealand's mandated deployment numbers are currently at their lowest point since 2013;
  4. **Note** that these proposals can be undertaken without affecting the ability of the New Zealand Defence Force to meet standing obligations within the Pacific, or emergency responses;

<sup>5</sup> Impacts on international missions include: partial suspension of mission activities; temporary withdrawal of non-essential personnel and prohibitive access requirements for arriving personnel.

5. **Note** all costs would be met within existing baseline for Vote Defence Force: Operations Contributing to New Zealand's Security, Stability and Interests and that no funding is requested through this paper.

Authorised for lodgement

Rt Hon Winston Peters  
Minister of Foreign Affairs

Hon Ron Mark  
Minister of Defence

Released by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and  
the Minister of Defence





s6(a)

Released by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and  
the Minister of Defence

