

UK and Fiji seal new deal on Maritime Security

Fiji's commitment towards securing and policing its maritime borders is recognised through the signing of a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Fijian Government.

The MOU was officially signed by the Permanent Secretary (PS) of the Office of the Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs, Mr. Yogesh Karan and the British High Commissioner to Fiji, His Excellency Dr. Brian Jones, on Saturday 19 March, 2022 on board the Royal Navy's Ship HMS Spey. His Excellency The President of Fiji was also at the signing.

In welcoming the new partnership, PS Karan on behalf of the Honourable Prime Minister, Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama, thanked the Government of the United Kingdom of the Great Britain for the exemplary partnership in further advancing our shared commitment on oceans conservation, climate change and tackling maritime security challenges.

He acknowledged the British High Commissioner Dr. Brian Jones for his unwavering support towards the new initiative, which further strengthens the diplomatic ties between Fiji-UK.

This collaboration, he said illustrates Fiji and UK's strong historical ties and solidarity in areas of climate change, oceans, trade, defence and security. PS Karan said the partnership aligns with Fiji-UK's commitment on oceans and implementation of the SDG Agenda 2030 vision of a sustainable ocean or SDG 14.

It also complements Fiji's existing capabilities in maritime management and further elevates the bilateral relations between Fiji and UK, which has continued to deepen in mutual interests and priorities.

PS Karan conveyed the Fijian Government's appreciation to HMS Spey's Executive Officer, Lieutenant Commander Macnae and her crew for their remarkable commitment and service that reaches Fiji, Pacific and beyond.

The British High Commissioner to Fiji, Dr. Brian Jones, said:

The signing of this agreement means Fijian sailors will be able to board Royal Navy vessels and vice versa. This will allow us to work more closely together to combat illegal maritime activity in the Pacific. HMS Spey, currently here with us in Suva, is expected to be in the Pacific for five years or more. Learning from partners like Fiji on the challenges faced and working together on solutions is key for us.

Rear Admiral Simon Asquith OBE, Commander of Operations for the Royal Navy, said:

This MOU enables the Royal Navy and several Fijian civil and military maritime authorities to exchange personnel between them for the purpose of "shipriding". Such activity provides invaluable training and experience to the embarked "shiprider", improving co-operation, co-ordination and interoperability.

The Royal Navy's greenest ship HMS Spey is currently in Fiji to engage with the local communities and the Republic of Fiji Navy to work together on security and climate change challenges. Earlier this year, HMS Spey visited Tonga following the Hunga-Tonga volcanic eruption and tsunami, delivering humanitarian supplies and supporting repair work to communications infrastructure. HMS Spey is expected to depart Fiji later this month.