



Chief of Navy Australia Address

8th Multilateral Maritime Virtual Key Leadership Engagement – 1 Jun (31 May) 2023

As delivered.

Introductory Comments

Good Morning from Canberra Ladies and Gentlemen

Acknowledge Audience.

I would like to thank Admiral Paparo for the invitation to participate today, and appreciate the opportunity to share our nations experiences in combatting IUU Fishing.

Maritime Challenges in Combatting Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing)

Australia, along with our Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean neighbours face particular issues in addressing this challenge. For a nation with a relatively small population, Australia's EEZ is the third largest in the world behind France and the United States. It's 15% of the world's total.

By way of example, Australia's distant island territory of Heard Island and MacDonal Island – Over 2100 nm SW of Perth in Western Australia over open ocean – has a recent history of IUU fishing. In 2003, a vessel detected illegally fishing for Patagonian Tooth Fish near these islands was pursued for over 3900 nm before being detained off South Africa.

Similarly, our 17 Pacific island neighbours who form the Pacific Island Forum Fisheries Agencies together have jurisdiction for over 28% of the area of the world's total EEZ area and host large foreign fishing fleets. For Australia and our neighbours, combatting IUU Fishing is a problem of scale.

Australian government agencies, including the Australian Fisheries Management Agency and Maritime Broder Command, detect significant IUU Fishing in areas North of Western Australia. However, interceptions are sporadic due to competing civil maritime security priorities.

Australia's Approach to Combatting IUU Fishing

Maritime Border Command is a joint inter-agency organisation comprising the Australian Defence Force and the Australian Border Force staff –with representatives from the Australian Federal Police and the Australian Fisheries Management Authority – under a Navy Admiral, who is also a sworn Border Force officer. This agency assigns RAN and ABF resources, such as Patrol Boats and Maritime Patrol Aircraft – or



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often major surface combatants during periods of high demand – to address Civil Maritime Security Threats, including IUU Fishing.

Many of our Pacific Neighbours do not have equivalent resources available to monitor and protect their EEZs, despite their vast area and high volume of fishing activity. To bolster our neighbours Maritime Security, the Australian government provides assistance to many Pacific nations under the Pacific Maritime Security Program.

The Guardian Class Patrol Boat program – which will deliver 22 patrol boats to 12 Pacific nations – and the Regional Integrated Aerial Surveillance Program helps provide the means for Pacific Nations to start addressing IUU Fishing and other maritime security issues

Challenges

Australia is a Middle Power with relatively modest capabilities for the size of our jurisdiction. While we are successful in combatting some of the IUU Fishing in our maritime jurisdiction, much occurs unchecked. This is why we share information, as well as conduct joint training and exercises, with our Pacific Partners.

Our ADF resources are often in demand for other security tasks, and there is a tension between supporting Civil Maritime Security and training for High End Warfare for some of the platforms which we assign to these roles.

Dissimilar IT systems and data formats can serve as barriers to cooperation in sharing Maritime Domain Awareness, where different agencies and different countries employ individual tools and data sets.

Similarly, sources of maritime intelligence are often classified, which inhibits timely sharing between countries particularly in the absence of memorandums of understanding and when systems are incompatible systems (Particularly those outside FVEYs).

These challenges will not diminish in the medium term, as competition and demand push fishing fleets further from their traditional waters and towards other maritime jurisdictions

It is only through enhanced cooperation that our nations will address this challenge moving forwards.