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New Zealand Defence Force  
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New Zealand

OIA-2023-4603

9 February 2023

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@odt.co.nz

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your email of 7 January 2023 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), the following:

*- The number of incidents of verbal/ physical violence or abuse reported by NZDF staff in MIQ facilities during operation protect (broken down by type, facility and month)*

This information is held by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE), which was the lead agency for the New Zealand Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In consultation with MBIE, they have advised that a manual search of all incidents would be required to separate them by agency/staff. As a result MBIE advised against a transfer of this part of your request as it would be refused in accordance with section 18(f) of the OIA.

*- The number of injuries reported by NZDF staff, broken down by facility, month and degree of severity*

Such information as may be held regarding this part of your request will be recorded in the medical files of individual personnel. A manual search of these files would be required to identify the requested information. This part of your request is therefore declined in accordance with section 18(f) of the OIA.

*- All incident reports pertaining to incidents involving physical abuse or assault where NZDF staff were involved*

This information is also held by MBIE, and as noted above, they advised against a transfer as the request would be declined in accordance with section 18(f) of the OIA.

*- The number of NZDF staff withdrawn from MIQ isolation as a result of strain or injury, broken down by facility and month*

The following table provides the number of personnel withdrawn from Managed Isolation and Quarantine facilities (MIQFs) as a result of injury, illness or medical condition. Location by area is provided when the facility was not recorded.

Location	Month + Year	Number
Bay Plaza - Wellington	November 2020	1
Grand Mercure – Wellington	December 2020	1
Rydges Hotel – Rotorua	June 2021	1

Grand Millennium – Auckland	June 2021	1
Sudima – Rotorua	July 2021	1
Auckland	August 2021	1
Auckland	September 2021	2
Auckland	February 2022	1
Ibis – Hamilton	February 2022	1
Christchurch	March 2022	1

*- The number of psychological referrals and post operations psychological debriefs for MIQ staff broken down by month*

The table below provides the number of personnel referred to a psychologist by month.

Month	2020	2021	2022
January	0	61	5
February	0	74	17
March	0	75	12
April	0	47	0
May	0	4	0
June	0	20	0
July	8	15	0
August	62	37	0
September	40	40	0
October	50	5	0
November	120	34	0
December	19	26	0

*- The estimated number prior to the operation of psychological referrals and post operations psychological debriefs (i.e., how many were planned for)*

An estimate was not generated, therefore this part of your request is declined in accordance with section 18(e) of the OIA. Personnel deployed on Operation Protect were supported by both programmed and on-request initiatives by wellbeing personnel including defence psychologists resourced specifically to the Operation and on-call chaplains.

*-Any EARLLS items generated under operation protect pertaining to management of MIQ patrons*

The following entries related to the management of MIQF patrons are from the NZDF Electronic Activity Reporting and Lessons Learned System (EARLLS):

- There was a variety of information flows from different organisations and information arriving at MIQFs at different times. The team at MIQFs were not always able to effectively brief guests. Late notice changes often caused tension or anxiety amongst the guests which had to be managed by Other Government Agencies / the NZDF team.
- Guests have commented favourably on NZDF staff and their ability to resolve concerns or listen and understand.
- It is perceived that information flow to MIQFs is stilted, time late, or did not provide the “why” behind policy changes. NZDF staff are on the frontline, and this affects the ability to manage guests and maintain morale/well being within confinement.

*-The number of NZDF staff who have quit since operation protect, directly citing the operation as a reason for leaving the service*

NZDF personnel are not required to give their reasons for leaving the organisation. A question regarding participation in Operation Protect as a reason for deciding to leave the NZDF was added to the exit survey from 1 April 2021. From that date until 31 December 2022, a total of 1,368 personnel completed an exit survey. Of these, 303 personnel cited Operation Protect as being somewhat or very important in their decisions to leave; 1,065 personnel cited Operation Protect as either slightly / not at all important, or not applicable.

*- the latest Defence Force Capability and Readiness Update memo*

An extension of the time to make a decision on this part of your request is required to 13 March 2023. This is to enable consultations necessary regarding the release of this Minister of Defence briefing.

You have the right, under section 28(3) of the OIA, to ask an Ombudsman to review this response to your request. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Responses to official information requests are proactively released where possible. This response to your request will be published shortly on the NZDF website, with your personal information removed.

Yours sincerely



**AJ WOODS**  
Air Commodore  
Chief of Staff HQNZDF



## NEW ZEALAND DEFENCE FORCE

## SUBMISSION TO MINISTER COVER SHEET

<b>Title</b>	NEW ZEALAND DEFENCE FORCE CAPABILITY AND READINESS UPDATE FOR THE PERIOD ENDING APRIL 2023				
<b>Tracking No</b>	NZDF Tracking # 2022-284		Minister's Tracking #		
<b>Importance of the Issue</b>	High	v	Moderate		Routine
<b>Urgency for Attention/Sign-off</b>	NOT URGENT		Request ministerial response by: Not required		
<b>Contacts</b>	LTCOL s. 9(2)(g)(i)		s. 9(2)(a)	s. 9(2)(a)	
<b>Purpose</b>	To provide an update on the capability and readiness status of the New Zealand Defence Force, including response options for the 2022-23 High Risk Weather Season.				
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p>It is recommended that you:</p> <p>a. <b>Note s. 6(a)</b> [REDACTED].</p> <p>b. <b>Note</b> that the NZDF is able to provide a range of tailored responses over the 2022-23 High Risk Weather Season (HRWS), but at reduced capacity and timeliness.</p> <p>c. <b>Note</b> that HMNZS TE MANA will provide a limited Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) capability until HMNZS CANTERBURY force generates to be the primary response for the HRWS.</p> <p>d. <b>Note s. 6(a)</b> [REDACTED].</p> <p>e. <b>Note</b> that Army is able to meet all Special Operations standing domestic commitments, and s. 6(a) [REDACTED] meet concurrent Special Operations domestic, regional and global responses.</p> <p>f. <b>Note</b> that Army, s. 6(a) [REDACTED] is able to provide concurrent, short duration medium scale regional forces in response to security and in support of HADR.</p> <p>g. <b>Note</b> that SH-2G(I) Seasprite helicopters are available with some limitations.</p> <p>h. <b>Note</b> that the Air Force Rotary Wing Transport Force is available at prescribed notice, and Fixed Wing Transport Force and Air Surveillance Reconnaissance Force capabilities remain available, although in a reduced capacity.</p>				
<b>MoD Consultation</b>	Not required ( <i>provide reasons</i> ): NZDF matter only.				
<b>Minister's Comments</b>					
<b>Minister's Action</b>	Signed/Noted/Agreed/Approved/Declined/Discussion required				
	Referred to:				
<b>Minister's Signature</b>				<b>Date:</b>	

KR SHORT  
Air Marshal  
Chief of Defence Force

18 Oct 22





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NEW ZEALAND

NTM 2022-284

18 October 2022

Minister of Defence

## NZDF CAPABILITY AND READINESS UPDATE FOR THE PERIOD ENDING 30 APRIL 2023

### Purpose

1. The purpose of this Note is to provide an update on the capability and readiness status of the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF), including response options for the 2022-23 High Risk Weather Season (HRWS).<sup>1</sup>

### Background: Impacts on Capability and Readiness

2. NZDF makes available a suite of military capabilities within prescribed response times to support Government objectives, by maintaining a skilled workforce and specialised military equipment that can be drawn upon when needed.

3. The workforce remains significantly fragile as high attrition rates have resulted in workforce hollowness at key leadership levels and specifically skilled trades. This hollowness has reduced NZDF's ability to respond to emergency events, introduce into service updated and new capabilities, and regenerate post Operation PROTECT.<sup>2</sup>

4. In addition the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine on global supply chains has lengthened repair and maintenance timeframes further limiting NZDF's ability to respond effectively. Whilst these capability and readiness implications have been briefed to you previously,<sup>3</sup> this Note updates NZDF's capability and readiness status during the HRWS.

### Navy Capabilities

5. The Navy will be:
- able** to meet all specified and regional tasks with some risks and/or limitations;
  - able** to meet all immediate domestic emergency responses;
  - able** to largely deliver Outputs 4.1 (resource and border protection operations) and 4.3 (assistance to the civil power and provision of a public service in emergency situations), which is border protection, domestic and local regional civil defence or Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) in association with other Services with some limitations. Specifically:

<sup>1</sup> November 2022 – April 2023.

<sup>2</sup> The NZDF support to the All-of-Government COVID-19 response.

<sup>3</sup> Notes to Minister NZDF 2021-112 dated 21 May 2021, NZDF 2021- 403 dated 10 December 2021, NZDF 2022-045 dated 23 February 2022, and NZDF 2022-168 dated 30 June 2022.

- (1) HMNZS TE MANA will provide a limited maritime HADR response during the period 1 – 25 November 2022 whilst HMNZS CANTERBURY conducts force generation.
- (2) HMNZS CANTERBURY will provide a maritime HADR response for the remainder of the HRWS from 25 November 2022, until 30 April 2023.
- (3) HMNZS MANAWANUI and HMNZS AOTEAROA will be available from 2 December 2022 as a HADR response option if required.
- (4) HMNZS MATATAUA will be able to support HADR tasks.
- (5) Domestic maritime search and rescue will be provided by HMNZS TAUPO until 14 November 2022 when HMNZS CANTERBURY assumes the role of duty ship. HMNZS MANAWANUI is available from 2 December 2022 if required.

d. s. 6(a)

e. s. 6(a)

#### Army Capabilities

6. The Army will be:

- a. **able** to meet all Special Operations standing domestic commitments;
- b. **able**, s. 6(a) to meet concurrent Special Operations domestic, regional and global responses. s. 6(a);
- c. **able** to provide a reduced level of support to Output 4.3 (assistance to the civil power and provision of a public service in emergency situations) for short durations, limited to small scale, domestic and civil defence response tasks (25 person response groups);
- d. **able** to provide limited support to Output 4.4 (military assistance to the civil authorities in non-emergency situations) on a case-by-case basis dependant on capabilities requested, scale and duration;

e. s. 6(a)

f. s. 6(a)

- g. **able**, with risk, to provide concurrent, non-enduring medium scale regional responses for security and HRWS events as follows:

- (1) s. 6(a) [REDACTED]
- (2) A regional HADR response group at high readiness with military engineer construction capabilities. This response carries risk due to high attrition of suitably qualified and experienced trade personnel, and the concurrent support to Operation ANTARCTICA. s. 9(2)(g)(i) [REDACTED].

#### Air Force Capabilities

7. The Air Force can continue to meet domestic outputs, and maintain the required platforms and capacity to meet regional SAR and HADR responses. Individual capabilities are available as follows:

- a. **Fixed Wing Transport Force.** C-130H Hercules are available at prescribed notice, noting the demands of planned tasking in support of Operation ANTARCTICA (2022/23 season commitment out to 5 March 2023) and scheduled maintenance. There are generally two to three C-130H Hercules available at any given time, and the fleet will reduce to four aircraft after planned retirement of one aircraft in February 2023. Due to scheduled maintenance requirements, there will be only one Boeing 757 aircraft available for the period 2 – 21 March 2023.
- b. **Rotary Wing Transport Force.** NH90 helicopters are available at prescribed notice, and A109 helicopters are available to provide full national contingency cover. Much needed ship deck operations training and currency will be conducted by NH90 helicopters during early 2023, as well as plans to conduct Exercise TROPIC ASTRA in Fiji during March 2023, may require aircraft and personnel changes in order to provide an appropriate HADR response during that period.
- c. **Airborne Surveillance and Response Force.** The P-3K2 Orion fleet remains at the prescribed notice for national contingencies, although there may be short periods where the C-130H Hercules will provide national contingency cover. There are now three P-3K2 Orion aircraft and two crews available to conduct tasks until the planned aircraft withdrawal date of 30 June 2023.
- d. **Naval Helicopter Force.** SH-2G(I) Seasprite helicopters are available, with some limitations due to serviceability, to support Navy aviation commitments. In accordance with the Navy Fleet Plan, two flights (Seasprite helicopter and maintenance) are expected to embark in CAN for operations in the South West Pacific and Southern Ocean regions during the first quarter of 2023.

#### Conclusion

8. The effects of the NZDF's commitment to Operation PROTECT, global supply chain issues and an increasingly difficult labour market will continue to impact on operational responses and the introduction into service of new capabilities. Notwithstanding, the NZDF retains a number of options that can be tailored to specific circumstances.



## Recommendations

9. It is recommended that you:

- a. **Note** s. 6(a) [REDACTED].
- b. **Note** that the NZDF is able to provide a range of tailored responses over the 2022-23 High Risk Weather Season (HRWS), but at reduced capacity and timeliness.
- c. **Note** that HMNZS TE MANA will provide a limited Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) capability until HMNZS CANTERBURY force generates to be the primary response for the HRWS.
- d. **Note** s. 6(a) [REDACTED].
- e. **Note** that Army is able to meet all Special Operations standing domestic commitments, and s. 6(a) [REDACTED] meet concurrent Special Operations domestic, regional and global responses.
- f. **Note** that Army will, s. 6(a) [REDACTED] be able to provide concurrent, short duration medium scale regional forces in response to security and in support of HADR.
- g. **Note** that the SH-2G(I) Seasprite helicopters are available with some limitations due to serviceability.
- h. **Note** that the Air Force Rotary Wing Transport Force is available at prescribed notice, and Fixed Wing Transport Force and Air Surveillance Reconnaissance Force capabilities remain available, although in a reduced capacity.



**KR SHORT**

Air Marshal

Chief of Defence Force