



**FFA**

*Strengthening national capacity and regional solidarity for sustainable tuna fisheries*

**Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries**

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Friday 26 May 2017**

### **Intel and analysis continues as Tui Moana surveillance sweep ends**

*FFA HQ, Honiara, SOLOMON ISLANDS* – There were no apprehensions and no blue boats, but the annual fisheries surveillance sweep of the Polynesia sub-region still served up a round of interesting highlights for 2017. Coordinated by the FFA’s Regional Fisheries Surveillance Centre, Operation Tui Moana ended its ten-day run on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> May.

Despite the high winds and rough seas which hampered the ability of the five deployed patrol boats from Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, Australia and New Zealand to conduct boardings, “the completion of 18 air surveillance missions flown out of 21 planned, covering 7.3 million sq. km-- a staggering 100% of the participating EEZs-- signals the ongoing vigilance of Pacific nations over their EEZs and high seas borders,” said FFA Director-General James Movick.

“A total of 186 detections, 16 boardings, and no infractions is a credit to the efforts of all concerned, and I’m pleased by the ongoing quality of intel and analysis support to and from participating members”, he added. “We have seen a shift in the nature of IUU fishing in the region away from unlicensed rogue vessels and towards licensed vessels contravening their conditions, especially through misreporting and underreporting their activities and through unauthorized transshipment. The fact that no rogue vessels were detected despite the enormous coverage reinforces this.”

The intelligence cell for Tui Moana, which looks in finer detail at the activities of licensed vessels generated 10 "Vessel of Interest" notifications advising members of questionable activities throughout the region, and also provided support to non-participating members in three separate investigations.

DG Movick also strongly commended the ongoing air support from the Defense assets collectively dubbed the ‘Quads’ – Australia, France, New Zealand and the United States. “All of the participating nations received surveillance coverage, with the five participating patrol boats providing a combined 28 days at sea on patrol,” he says.

He welcomed the “strong and engaged efforts” of the international team working from the FFA RFSC – watch keepers from Australia, Fiji, Palau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu were joined by Observers from the Pacific networks, AFMA , NZ and US-NOAA officials.

Chief of Staff for Tui Moana 17, Senior Inspector Dicky George of the Vanuatu Police Maritime Wing led coordination of both the ops and intel teams within the RFSC, and was instrumental in supporting day-to-day logistics for Operation Tui Moana 2017.

Regional patrol boats from the Cook Islands and Tuvalu were unable to participate due to refits or maintenance work, and French assets from Noumea were withdrawn to provide disaster relief.

As well, practical application of the Niue Treaty’s provisions for fisheries surveillance and maritime cooperation added to the engagement for watch keepers from Tonga, Samoa and Vanuatu.

Operation Tui Moana is the second FFA-led multi-lateral Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) operation of the calendar year. It usually involves six FFA members (Tonga, Samoa, Cook Islands and Niue, Fiji and Tuvalu), with the usual support from the Quadrilateral Defence Coordination Group (QUAD) nations.

“Again, as in previous operations the support of the Australian Department of Defence, International Policy Division (IP-Div) through funding support for fuel and administrative arrangements for the Pacific Patrol Boat Program, is greatly appreciated,” says DG Movick. --**ENDS**

**ABOUT FFA:**

The Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) strengthens national capacity and regional solidarity so its 17 members can manage, control and develop their tuna fisheries now and in the future. Based in Honiara, Solomon Islands, FFA's 17 Pacific Island members are Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Since 1979, FFA has facilitated regional cooperation so that all Pacific countries benefit from the sustainable use of tuna – a multi-billion dollar resource important for many people’s livelihoods in the Pacific.

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