

25 July 2024

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Personal details removed for  
proactive release

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OIA 29388

Personal details removed for proactive release

I refer to your email of 21 May 2024 in which you request the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

*please provide all written advice, notes, aides-memoire, briefings, and reports produced regarding the civil unrest in New Caledonia from 13 May 2024 to 21 May 2024.*

On 29 May 2024, we contacted you seeking to refine your request to be for:

*Situation Reports (SitReps) relating to New Caledonia unrest provided to the Minister of Foreign Affairs dated 13 May 2024 to 21 May 2024 (inclusive).*

On 10 June 2024, we sent you a follow up email asking if you were still interested in information regarding the recent civil unrest in New Caledonia.

You responded on the same day, seeking to refine your request to be for:

*Situation Reports (SitReps) relating to New Caledonia unrest provided to the Minister of Foreign Affairs dated 13 May 2024 to 10 June 2024 (inclusive).*

We responded to you on 12 June 2024, confirming our agreement of your refined request

On 8 July 2024, the timeframes for responding to your request were extended by an additional 20 working days because responding to your request necessitated the review of a large quantity of information (section 15A(1)(a) of the OIA refers).

The first SitRep relating to the unrest in New Caledonia is dated 14 May 2024. There were no SitReps prior to this date. The final SitRep relating to the unrest in New Caledonia is dated 28 May 2024. There were no SitReps after this date. Therefore we refuse your request for SitReps for 13 May 2024, and for the period 29 May 2024 to 10 June 2024, under section 18(e) of the OIA, as the information you requested does not exist.

The information in scope of your request is set out in the document schedule in **annex one**.

The information relevant to your request is attached. We have withheld some information under the following sections of the OIA:

- 6(a): to avoid prejudicing the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the New Zealand Government;
- 6(b)(i): to protect the passing of information from another government on a confidential basis;

- 6(b)(ii): to protect the passing of information from an international organisation on a confidential basis;
- 9(2)(a): to protect individuals' privacy;
- 9(2)(ba)(i): to protect the supply of confidential information by another party;
- 9(2)(f)(iv): to protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials; and
- 9(2)(g)(i): to protect the free and frank expression of opinions by departments.

Where the information has been withheld under section 9 of the OIA, we have identified no public interest in releasing the information that would override the reasons for withholding it.

Please note that it is our policy to proactively release our responses to official information requests where possible. Therefore, our response to your request (with your personal information removed) may be published on the Ministry website: [www.mfat.govt.nz/en/about-us/contact-us/official-information-act-responses/](http://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/about-us/contact-us/official-information-act-responses/)

If you have any questions about this decision, you can contact us by email at: [DM-ESD@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:DM-ESD@mfat.govt.nz). You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision by contacting [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'SC', written in a cursive style.

Sarah Corbett  
for Acting Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade

## Annex One – Document Schedule

Situation Reports provided to the Minister of Foreign Affairs 14 May 2024 to 23 May 2024 (inclusive)					
No.	Day	Date	Time	SitRep Number	Comments
1	Tuesday	14 May 2024	1012	SitRep 1	P 1-2
2	Tuesday	14 May 2024	1909	SitRep 2	P 3-6
3	Tuesday	14 May 2024	1933	SitRep 2 – amended	P 7- 11
4	Wednesday	15 May 2024	0801	SitRep 3	P 12- 19
5	Wednesday	15 May 2024	1054	SitRep 4	Mistitled as SitRep 3 P 20-29
6	Thursday	16 May 2024	1954	SitRep 5	P 30-35
7	Friday	17 May 2024	1121	SitRep 6	P 36-43
8	Friday	17 May 2024	1735	SitRep 7	P 44-53
9	Saturday	18 May 2024	1107	SitRep 8	P 54-63
10	Saturday	18 May 2024	1919	SitRep 9	P 64-74
11	Sunday	19 May 2024	1110	SitRep 10	P 75-86
12	Sunday	19 May 2024	1858	SitRep 11	P 87-95
13	Monday	20 May 2024	1848	SitRep 12	File 2 p1
14	Monday	20 May 2024	1849	SitRep 13	File 2 p 11
15	Tuesday	21 May 2024	1056	SitRep 14	File 2 p 21
16	Wednesday	22 May 2024	1200	SitRep 15	File 2 p 31
17	Wednesday	22 May 2024	1136	SitRep 16	File 2 p 41
18	Thursday	23 May 2024	1128	SitRep 17	File 2 p 52
19	Thursday	23 May 2024	1915	SitRep 18	File 2 p 63
20	Thursday	23 May 2024	1915	SitRep 19	File 2 p 74
21	Friday	24 May 2024	1104	SitRep 20	File 3 p 1
22	Friday	24 May 2024	2002	SitRep 21	File 3 p 12
23	Saturday	25 May 2024	1119	SitRep 22	File 3 p 24
24	Saturday	25 May 2024	1934	SitRep 23	File 3 p 35
25	Sunday	26 May 2024	1103	SitRep 24	File 3 p 47
26	Sunday	26 May 2024	1916	SitRep 25	File 3 p 55
27	Monday	27 May 2024	1102	SitRep 26	File 3 p 61
28	Monday	27 May 2024	1859	SitRep 27	File 3 p 66
29	Tuesday	28 May 2024	1655	SitRep 28	File 3 p 72

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**From:** NOUMEA <NOU@mfat.govt.nz>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 14 May 2024 10:12 am  
**To:** NOUMEA <NOU@mfat.govt.nz>; PACPF <PACPF@mfat.govt.nz>  
**Cc:** DS PDG <DSPDG@mfat.govt.nz>; CEO <DM-CEO@mfat.govt.nz>; DCE <DCE@mfat.govt.nz>; ...PACIFIC POSTS <PACIFICPOSTS@mfat.govt.nz>; DS AAG <DM-DSAAG@mfat.govt.nz>; DS EMA <DM-DSEMA@mfat.govt.nz>; DS MLG <DM-DSMLG@mfat.govt.nz>; AUS <DM-AUS@mfat.govt.nz>; EUR <DM-EUR@mfat.govt.nz>; ISED <DM-ISED@mfat.govt.nz>; SORD Security <DM-SEC@mfat.govt.nz>; CON <DM-CONS@mfat.govt.nz>; PARIS <PAR@mfat.govt.nz>; FM.P/S MFA (Seemail) <PS.MFA@mfat.govt.nz>; FM.P/S Associate MFA (Seemail) <PSAssociateMFASeemail@mfat.govt.nz>; FM.Defence (Seemail) <fm.defence@nzdf.mil.nz>; FM.DPMC (FPA) (Seemail) <DPMCFPA@mfat.govt.nz>; FM.Police (Seemail) <Registry.NIC@police.govt.nz>; <sup>s6(a)</sup>  
FM.Police (Seemail) <Registry.NIC@police.govt.nz>; FM.Customs Service (Seemail) <cables@customs.govt.nz>; PACMM <PACMM@mfat.govt.nz>; PACREG <PACREG@mfat.govt.nz>; PHM <PHM@mfat.govt.nz>; DEVPP <DM-DEVPP@mfat.govt.nz>; DEVECO <DM-DEVECO@mfat.govt.nz>  
**Subject:** FORMAL MESSAGE: NEW CALEDONIA UNREST - SITREP 1

[RESTRICTED]

### **RĀPOPOTO – SUMMARY**

The security situation in New Caledonia has sharply deteriorated in the last 24 hours, and particularly overnight. While the day of 13 May saw relatively contained road blockages (although still accompanied by burning tyres and rubbish bins) on the outside of town, overnight there have been reports of significant destruction and large fires including in Noumea city. Confirmed details at this stage are limited, and we will report further as this information becomes available.

The French High Commission has called on everyone in the Noumea area to stay at home if possible. New Caledonian Government officials believe the situation could get worse tonight when voting in Paris on the proposal to expand New Caledonia's electoral roll is set to take place. The High Commission has put a curfew in place for the evening of 14 May to be in effect from 6am to 6pm. This may be extended for further nights if required.

As a result of the situation, a decision has been taken to postpone the Minister's visit to the territory. NOU is not yet aware of any New Zealanders requiring assistance.

### **HOHENGA – ACTION**

For information.

### **PŪRONGO – REPORT**

We report on the latest security developments in New Caledonia.

#### *Key developments*

- During the day of May 13 there was some small protest action, and a number of

road blocks (often accompanied by burning tyres or rubbish bins) were established by protesters across the territory, including on main roads into Noumea.

- Reports are still coming in via media of events overnight, and we have not received a comprehensive read out from the French High Commission. Below is an overview of key developments:
  - A number of fires were lit by protesters in locations across the Noumea city area. These are under control this morning, but we have heard reports of fires still burning in some areas outside the city (notably the Mont Dore area which is known for frequent road blockages and violence directed towards police and security forces).
  - A number of road blocks remain in place, and we understand that travel between Noumea and the airport is not currently possible.
  - The airport has been closed and flights in and out of the territory have been postponed. This includes a flight scheduled for Auckland this morning. We have not yet been contacted by any New Zealanders requiring assistance as a result of this flight delay.
  - The French High Commission has issued a public statement confirming that a number of security officers have been injured overnight and that 36 arrests were made. At this stage there are no serious injuries to members of the public reported.
- s6(a), s6(b)(i)
- s6(a), s6(b)(i)
- A curfew has been put in place in Noumea to be in effect from 6pm tonight until 6am Wednesday morning, and the High Commission is calling on people to remain at home today if possible. There is a temporary ban on the sale of alcohol and the carrying of any firearms in the Noumea area. All schools are closed.

#### *Staff welfare*

- All consulate staff are currently safe and have been advised to work from home, where possible. DM PACPF and our additional support officer from Wellington are also safe in their hotels.
- Two staff members <sup>s9(2)(a)</sup> had already shifted into hotels in the city in preparation for the Minister's visit.

#### *Consular*

- As noted above, Air Calin flights in and out of New Caledonia have been postponed for today. This includes a flight bound for Auckland this morning.
- We are issuing new Safe Travel messaging this morning advising New Zealanders to stay in place and follow directions from local authorities. New Zealanders due to travel should contact their airline.
- We are not at this stage aware of any New Zealanders requiring assistance.

ENDS

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**From:** NOUMEA <NOU@mfat.govt.nz>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 14 May 2024 7:09 pm  
**To:** NOUMEA <NOU@mfat.govt.nz>; PACPF <PACPF@mfat.govt.nz>  
**Cc:** DS PDG <DSPDG@mfat.govt.nz>; CEO <DM-CEO@mfat.govt.nz>; DCE <DCE@mfat.govt.nz>; ...PACIFIC POSTS <PACIFICPOSTS@mfat.govt.nz>; DS AAG <DM-DSAAG@mfat.govt.nz>; DS EMA <DM-DSEMA@mfat.govt.nz>; DS MLG <DM-DSMLG@mfat.govt.nz>; AUS <DM-AUS@mfat.govt.nz>; EUR <DM-EUR@mfat.govt.nz>; ISED <DM-ISED@mfat.govt.nz>; SORD Security <DM-SEC@mfat.govt.nz>; CON <DM-CONS@mfat.govt.nz>; PARIS <PAR@mfat.govt.nz>; FM.P/S MFA (Seemail) <PS.MFA@mfat.govt.nz>; FM.P/S Associate MFA (Seemail) <PSAssociateMFASeemail@mfat.govt.nz>; FM.Defence (Seemail) <fm.defence@nzdf.mil.nz>; FM.DPMC (FPA) (Seemail) <DPMCFPA@mfat.govt.nz>; FM.Police (Seemail) <Registry.NIC@police.govt.nz>; s6(a)  
FM.Police (Seemail) <Registry.NIC@police.govt.nz>; FM.Customs Service (Seemail) <cables@customs.govt.nz>; PACMM <PACMM@mfat.govt.nz>; PACREG <PACREG@mfat.govt.nz>; PHM <PHM@mfat.govt.nz>; DEVPP <DM-DEVPP@mfat.govt.nz>; DEVECO <DM-DEVECO@mfat.govt.nz>  
**Subject:** FORMAL MESSAGE: NEW CALEDONIA UNREST - SITREP 2

[RESTRICTED]

### **RĀPOPOTO – SUMMARY**

Unrest has continued throughout the greater Noumea area of the course of the day. While the central city area remained relatively calm, road blocks remain in place preventing travel in or out of Noumea city. There are reports of significant looting of shops. There is a lot of information and images circulating on social media, and anxiety is high in the city.

s6(b)(i)

There are currently 66 New Zealanders registered on SafeTravel as being in New Caledonia. NOU has received some requests for information and assistance. We are advising all travellers to remain in place and follow the advice of local authorities and contact airlines for updates on flight arrangements.

### **HOHENGGA – ACTION**

For information.

### **PŪRONGO – REPORT**

We report on the latest security developments in New Caledonia.

#### *Key developments*

- Fire fighters in Noumea have received over 1,500 calls over the past 24 hours and

attended over 300 fires during the night of 13 May. Many car dealerships and rental parks have been targeted with significant damage reported. Fires are continuing to burn in a number of locations outside the central city, and there have been clashes between police and protesters in suburbs in the city.

- The French High Commission has confirmed that 35 police and gendarmes were injured overnight, and 48 people have been detained in relation to the violence.
- The political situation remains tense and in official statement issued today, New Caledonia's Government called on "all Caledonians, political, institutional, customary, religious, associative and family leaders, to assume their responsibilities. We ask them to use all the means at their disposal to restore reason and calm", while also noting that "current events are an unfortunate reminder of the fragility of the political, social, economic and cultural balances we have struggled to build since the Matignon-Oudinot agreements and the Nouméa Accord."
- s9(2)(g)(i) The head of the Cellule de Coordination des Actions de Terrain (CCAT – the protest coordination wing of the pro-independence umbrella group the FLNKS) meanwhile has declared that they are "not able to stop this wave of violence" which is the result of pent up tensions and a response to what the CCAT considers "hateful rhetoric" from pro-France politicians Nicolas Metzdorf and Sonia Backès as well as by the French state. Mayor of Noumea, Sonia Lagarde, has publicly stated her concern that the territory is heading again towards a state of civil war.
- s6(a), s6(b)(i)
- The High Commission has confirmed that additional French security forces are set to arrive in the territory over the course of the next few days. Reports indicate that this will include the RAID - the national police force's intervention unit - four squadrons of mobile gendarmes and two sections of the CRS-8, a unit specializing in responding to violence in urban settings, will arrive as reinforcements. Fifteen reinforcements from the GIGN - the national gendarmerie's intervention group - will also be sent to Nouméa.
- We understand that the head of the French Armed Forces in New Caledonia who had been scheduled to be on an official visit in Honolulu all this week is set to return to Noumea tonight.

#### *Staff welfare*

- All consulate staff remain safe, although anxiety is high and some local staff have expressed concerns about security in their areas.
- We have provided the French High Commission, police and gendarmes with an updated list of the addresses of our seconded staff.

#### *Consular*

- There are currently 66 people registered on Safe Travel as being in New Caledonia - an increase of about 40 from this morning. NOU has reached out to local hotels to request that they share the link to Safe Travel registration with any New Zealander guests.
- NOU has been in contact with some individuals seeking information or assistance. At this stage we are not aware of anyone requiring urgent assistance. We are encouraging all New Zealanders to remain in place and follow the advice of local authorities. All travellers should contact their airlines before proceeding to the

airport.

- HOP has spoken directly with Air New Zealand representatives s9(2)(ba)(i)

No

decision has been taken at this stage.

- We understand from contacts at the Tontouta airport, that is likely to remain closed until midnight Thursday 16. 27 of those registered on Safe Travel have indicated they are booked to travel before this time.
- NOU is coordinating with the Australian, Indonesian, Japanese and Vanuatu Consulates to share information about the situation and our consular responses. We are also sharing information with SPC.
- Australia has increased the level of its travel advisory for the Noumea and Tontouta areas, and we are currently reviewing our own travel advisory accordingly.

ENDS

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Duplicate material removed

Released under the Official Information Act

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**From:** NOUMEA <NOU@mfat.govt.nz>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 14 May 2024 7:33 pm  
**To:** NOUMEA <NOU@mfat.govt.nz>; PACPF <PACPF@mfat.govt.nz>  
**Cc:** DS PDG <DSPDG@mfat.govt.nz>; CEO <DM-CEO@mfat.govt.nz>; DCE <DCE@mfat.govt.nz>; ...PACIFIC POSTS <PACIFICPOSTS@mfat.govt.nz>; DS AAG <DM-DSAAG@mfat.govt.nz>; DS EMA <DM-DSEMA@mfat.govt.nz>; DS MLG <DM-DSMLG@mfat.govt.nz>; AUS <DM-AUS@mfat.govt.nz>; EUR <DM-EUR@mfat.govt.nz>; ISED <DM-ISED@mfat.govt.nz>; SORD Security <DM-SEC@mfat.govt.nz>; CON <DM-CONS@mfat.govt.nz>; PARIS <PAR@mfat.govt.nz>; FM.P/S MFA (Seemail) <PS.MFA@mfat.govt.nz>; FM.P/S Associate MFA (Seemail) <PSAssociateMFASeemail@mfat.govt.nz>; FM.Defence (Seemail) <fm.defence@nzdf.mil.nz>; FM.DPMC (FPA) (Seemail) <DPMCFPA@mfat.govt.nz>; FM.Police (Seemail) <Registry.NIC@police.govt.nz>; s6(a)  
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**Subject:** RE: FORMAL MESSAGE: NEW CALEDONIA UNREST - SITREP 2

[RESTRICED]

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Resend with amendments to summary.

[RESTRICED]

### **RĀPOPOTO – SUMMARY**

Unrest has continued throughout the greater Noumea area of the course of the day. While the central city area remained relatively calm, road blocks remain in place preventing travel in or out of Noumea city. There are reports of significant looting of shops. There is a lot of information and images circulating on social media, and anxiety is high in the city.

s6(b)(1)

on Sunday 12  
May French President Emmanuel Macron had issued a new invitation for political leaders to come to Paris to restart talks on New Caledonia's institutional future. He also promised that France would not proceed immediately to the final stage of consideration of the bill to open the New Caledonian electoral roll – s6(a) Congress of Versailles with the two houses of the French parliament. s6(a), s9(2)(9)(i)

There are currently 66 New Zealanders registered on SafeTravel as being in New Caledonia. NOU has received some requests for information and assistance. We are advising all travellers to remain in place and follow the advice of local authorities and contact airlines for updates on flight arrangements.

## **HOHENGA – ACTION**

For information.

## **PŪRONGO – REPORT**

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- The French High Commission has confirmed that 35 police and gendarmes were injured overnight, and 48 people have been detained in relation to the violence.
- The political situation remains tense and in official statement issued today, New Caledonia's Government called on "all Caledonians, political, institutional, customary, religious, associative and family leaders, to assume their responsibilities. We ask them to use all the means at their disposal to restore reason and calm", while also noting that "current events are an unfortunate reminder of the fragility of the political, social, economic and cultural balances we have struggled to build since the Matignon-Oudinot agreements and the Nouméa Accord."
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Cellule de Coordination des Actions de Terrain (CCAT – the protest coordination wing of the pro-independence umbrella group the FLNKS) meanwhile has declared that they are "not able to stop this wave of violence" which is the result of pent up tensions and a response to what the CCAT considers "hateful rhetoric" from pro-France politicians Nicolas Metzdorf and Sonia Backès as well as by the French state. Mayor of Noumea, Sonia Lagarde, has publicly stated her concern that the territory is heading again towards a state of civil war.
- s6(a), s6(b)(i)
- The High Commission has confirmed that additional French security forces are set to arrive in the territory over the course of the next few days. Reports indicate that this will include the RAID - the national police force's intervention unit - four squadrons of mobile gendarmes and two sections of the CRS-8, a unit specializing in responding to violence in urban settings, will arrive as reinforcements. Fifteen reinforcements from the GIGN - the national gendarmerie's intervention group - will also be sent to Nouméa.
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- NOU has been in contact with some individuals seeking information or assistance. At this stage we are not aware of anyone requiring urgent assistance. We are encouraging all New Zealanders to remain in place and follow the advice of local authorities. All travellers should contact their airlines before proceeding to the airport.
- HOP has spoken directly with Air New Zealand representatives s9(2)(ba)(i) No decision has been taken at this stage.
- We understand from contacts at the Tontouta airport, that is likely to remain closed until midnight Thursday 16. 27 of those registered on Safe Travel have indicated they are booked to travel before this time.
- NOU is coordinating with the Australian, Indonesian, Japanese and Vanuatu Consulates to share information about the situation and our consular responses. We are also sharing information with SPC.
- Australia has increased the level of its travel advisory for the Noumea and Tontouta areas, and we are currently reviewing our own travel advisory accordingly.

ENDS

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Released under the Official Information Act

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**From:** NOUMEA <NOU@mfat.govt.nz>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 15 May 2024 8:01 pm  
**To:** NOUMEA <NOU@mfat.govt.nz>; PACPF <PACPF@mfat.govt.nz>  
**Cc:** DS PDG <DSPDG@mfat.govt.nz>; CEO <DM-CEO@mfat.govt.nz>; DCE <DCE@mfat.govt.nz>; ...PACIFIC POSTS <PACIFICPOSTS@mfat.govt.nz>; DS AAG <DM-DSAAG@mfat.govt.nz>; DS EMA <DM-DSEMA@mfat.govt.nz>; DS MLG <DM-DSMLG@mfat.govt.nz>; AUS <DM-AUS@mfat.govt.nz>; EUR <DM-EUR@mfat.govt.nz>; ISED <DM-ISED@mfat.govt.nz>; SORD Security <DM-SEC@mfat.govt.nz>; CON <DM-CONS@mfat.govt.nz>; PARIS <PAR@mfat.govt.nz>; FM.P/S MFA (Seemail) <PS.MFA@mfat.govt.nz>; FM.P/S Associate MFA (Seemail) <PSAssociateMFASeemail@mfat.govt.nz>; FM.Defence (Seemail) <fm.defence@nzdf.mil.nz>; FM.DPMC (FPA) (Seemail) <DPMCFPA@mfat.govt.nz>; FM.Police (Seemail) <Registry.NIC@police.govt.nz>; s6(a)  
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**Subject:** FORMAL MESSAGE: NEW CALEDONIA UNREST - SITREP 3

[RESTRICTED]

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### RĀPOPOTO – SUMMARY

Areas of greater Noumea continued to experience significant unrest and violence despite the imposition of a curfew from 6pm to 6am. Information about the extent of violence continues to be patchy, and we have yet to receive a comprehensive briefing from the French High Commission. However, the situation is clearly worsening. There are growing concerns about inability to access food, medicines and the ability of emergency services to meet all needs (including emergency medical services). This was highlighted by the High Commissioner in his latest press conference at 3.45pm (local time) in which he warned that the current trajectory would see the territory head “straight into war”.

President of the Province Sud and prominent pro-France politician Sonia Backès has written to the French President requesting the declaration of a state of emergency in the territory – this would be the first time a state of emergency has been declared in New Caledonia since 1984. This would allow the State to implement greater restrictions on movement, and deploy the armed forces if required.

s6(a)

### HOHENGA – ACTION

For information.

s6(a)

## **PŪRONGO – REPORT**

### **Key developments**

#### *In New Caledonia*

- After the first serious injuries, including one death, were reported overnight after gunfire in the commune of Païta (north of Noumea), the day of 15 May has also seen two Kanak killed by members of the public claiming to be local militia in the Noumea outer suburb of Ducos.
- Areas of Magenta, Dumbéa, Mont Dore, on the outskirts of Noumea city continued to experience violence and clashes between protestors and police. The commune of Païta has also been the site of gunfire exchange between protestors and police forces.
- In those areas that have been badly affected by ongoing large fires, notably around the areas of Dumbea and Normandie, air quality is extremely poor.
- The French High Commission has reported that 130 people have been detained/arrested since the start of the unrest and around 60 gendarmes/police have been injured.
- In New Caledonia, there are currently around 1,000 gendarmes and 700 police officers, plus 7 squadrons of gendarmes (around 470) who have arrived as reinforcements from mainland France. That does not include members of the Raid and GIGN (see previous SITREP). A new convoy has been requested as a matter of urgency by the High Commissioner, and is due to arrive shortly from mainland France.
- Family members of gendarmes (often a target for violence) have been evacuated.
- The French Armed Forces have currently been tasked only with maintaining the security of the international airport and air base. The High Commissioner does not rule out further deploying military forces to other areas.
- While violence largely remains restricted to the outer areas of Noumea, overnight the President of the Loyalty Islands Province has also confirmed that the offices of the provincial government on the island of Maré were targeted.
- Over 2,500 passengers are estimated to be impacted by the cancellation of flights between now and Friday 17, when the airport is currently scheduled to reopen (though this remains subject to the evolution of the security situation and the ability for the French authorities to reopen the roads). It is not yet clear whether all passengers who have missed flights over the past few days will be able to be rebooked on currently scheduled flights on Friday 17 or Saturday 18 May, or whether airlines may look to put on additional flights. NOU is coordinating directly with Air New Zealand and airport authorities on the situation at Tontouta.
- All domestic flights have also been cancelled for today 15 May and it is not yet clear when they will restart. Ferries between Noumea and the outer islands (Loyalty Islands and Isle of Pines) have also been suspended until "the situation returns to normal".
- Schools have been instructed to remain closed until further notice. Some have been damaged by arson and this may impact their ability to reopen <sup>s9(2)(a)</sup>
- The majority of shops including supermarkets, pharmacies, and petrol stations remain closed. There are large queues of people outside those that are open.
- We are not aware of any shortages of essential items at this stage, however given the road blocks still in place this may impact ability for fuel to be transported from the main distribution centre (located outside of Noumea).



- To overcome road blockages between Mont Dore and the city, the Province Sud has put on boats to allow people to move to Noumea if required.
- In some local communities, residents have started setting up counter-blockades in an attempt to prevent damage to their homes and businesses. <sup>s6(a)</sup>

Given the high proportion of the population with firearms, there is increasing risk of violence between different groups of the population.

#### *From Paris*

- French Prime Minister Gabriel Attal has called on local actors to “take the extended hand” and respond positively to President Emmanuel Macron’s invitation for a meeting in Paris. Pro-France politician Sonia Backès has indicated her willingness to participate and suggested that a meeting could take place as early as 27 May.
- The French National Assembly (lower house of Parliament) adopted the proposed text to expand the local electoral roll in New Caledonia (351 for, 153 against), despite a vote in New Caledonia’s Congress on Monday calling for the text to be withdrawn immediately in order to allow more time for local discussions to continue. <sup>s6(a)</sup>

Many called on the Government to arrange a “dialogue mission”, potentially led by the UN, to help restart negotiations.

- Meanwhile, Macron has stated that, in the absence of local consensus or movement on negotiations, France will move ahead with the final stage to open the electoral roll – the Congress of Versailles uniting the two houses of Parliament – by the end of June.

#### **Staff welfare**

- Staff are currently all safe. However, the current situation is heavily impacting local staff ability to work (including assisting with consular caseloads).
- Seconded staff report having enough food and water for around 1 more week. There are limited opportunities to restock, and this may become more difficult if the situation continues.
- The immediate areas around the Chancery, as well as the HOP and DHOP residences, remain calm and largely unaffected by the unrest (although many shops in the areas are closed). DHOP visited the Chancery today and performed normal security checks.

#### **Consular**

- The number of people registered on Safe Travel has increased from around 20 yesterday morning to 138.
- Post is providing additional some assistance largely consisting of welfare calls at this stage to a small number of individuals. <sup>s9(2)(a)</sup>
- Post is in contact with major hotels, notably the Château Royal where we are aware a large group of New Zealanders are staying (including a group of 40 travel agents here for a conference).
- NOU spoke to hotel management to check arrangements. The hotel has confirmed that it has put additional rotating security in place every day from 3pm to 7am. They have a locked perimeter with guarded gates. We have checked on the food situation and the hotel says they have enough for at least 72 hours within the hotel, and they have supplies off site which they hope they can use to replenish.
- We are seeking information from the French High Commission regarding stocks of essential medicines, fuel and food. <sup>s6(a)</sup>
- NOU remains in close contact with our diplomatic corps colleagues, especially

Australia but are also coordinating together with Japan, Vanuatu, Indonesia, and SPC.

- s6(b)(i)

- s6(b)(i)

ENDS

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**From:** PACPF <PACPF@mfat.govt.nz>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 16 May 2024 10:54 am  
**To:** NOUMEA <NOU@mfat.govt.nz>; PACPF <PACPF@mfat.govt.nz>  
**Cc:** DS PDG <DSPDG@mfat.govt.nz>; CEO <DM-CEO@mfat.govt.nz>; DCE <DCE@mfat.govt.nz>; ...PACIFIC POSTS <PACIFICPOSTS@mfat.govt.nz>; DS AAG <DM-DSAAG@mfat.govt.nz>; DS EMA <DM-DSEMA@mfat.govt.nz>; DS MLG <DM-DSMLG@mfat.govt.nz>; AUS <DM-AUS@mfat.govt.nz>; EUR <DM-EUR@mfat.govt.nz>; ISED <DM-ISED@mfat.govt.nz>; SORD Security <DM-SEC@mfat.govt.nz>; CON <DM-CONS@mfat.govt.nz>; PARIS <PAR@mfat.govt.nz>; FM.P/S MFA (Seemail) <PS.MFA@mfat.govt.nz>; FM.P/S Associate MFA (Seemail) <PSAssociateMFASeemail@mfat.govt.nz>; FM.Defence (Seemail) <fm.defence@nzdf.mil.nz>; FM.DPMC (FPA) (Seemail) <DPMCFPA@mfat.govt.nz>; FM.Police (Seemail) <Registry.NIC@police.govt.nz>; <sup>s6(a)</sup>  
FM.Police (Seemail) <Registry.NIC@police.govt.nz>; FM.Customs Service (Seemail) <cables@customs.govt.nz>; PACMM <PACMM@mfat.govt.nz>; PACREG <PACREG@mfat.govt.nz>; PHM <PHM@mfat.govt.nz>; DEVPP <DM-DEVPP@mfat.govt.nz>; DEVECO <DM-DEVECO@mfat.govt.nz>  
**Subject:** RE: FORMAL MESSAGE: NEW CALEDONIA UNREST - SITREP 3

[RESTRICTED]

## RĀPOPOTO – SUMMARY

A state of emergency has been declared by the French Government [EUR/PAR reporting of 16/05/2024 refers] – the first since 1984. The death toll in this period of civil unrest has risen to four people. Overnight the death of one gendarme, who was shot in the head in the area of Mont Dore, was confirmed by the Minister of the Interior.

Staff at Post remain safe and sheltered. A ECC will be stood up to coordinate MFAT's response.

## HOHENGA – ACTION

## PŪRONGO – REPORT

### Key developments

#### *In New Caledonia*

- The death toll has risen to 4 people – a French gendarme from metropolitan France. The President of France issued a statement expressing his condolences to the family of the killed gendarme.
- Hundreds more have been reported as injured, and France has

reported over a hundred police officers and gendarmes have been injured. Road blocks to hospitals prevent accessing healthcare and may exacerbate the situation.

- The Customary Senate has been targeted by arson.
- Town hall of Païta was partially burnt.
- Locals are forming their own "militias" to defend their homes and businesses, and many streets have been blocked by homemade barricades – in some places using burnt out cars. Local community Whatsapp groups are sharing news and updates of what they are seeing in their areas – providing ripe conditions for misinformation to be shared.
- Reports that rioters continued to circulate freely, despite a second night of curfew being in place.

#### *From Paris*

- Following a meeting of the Defence and Security Council by President Emmanuel Macron, France has declared a state of emergency in New Caledonia. This is the first time since 1984 that the provision has been used.
- The PM is also set to hold an inter-ministerial crisis meeting.
- State of emergency initially in place for a period of up to 12 days and will need legislation to be passed for it to continue.
- Allows to expand powers of police, and may also see the curfew extended. It also allows for certain individuals to be placed under house arrest – s9(2)(g)(i)
- 1,800 police and gendarmes are currently mobilised in the territory, 500 more due to arrive. Around 50 extra firefighters due to arrive as well

#### **Staff welfare**

- No change, but officials in MFAT are considering additional resources to support staff.

#### **Consular**

- Australia has increased its travel alert level for **New Caledonia from 2 to 3**.
- New Zealand's current travel alert level for parts of New Caledonia is 2. Officials are considering raising this to a level 3 for the whole of New Caledonia. This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.
- s9(2)(a)

- welfare checks are being conducted by Post to monitor particular individuals.
- Air NZ has upgraded its aircraft for their next flight scheduled for 18 May, from a 165 seat to a 214 seater.

#### **Current media lines**

- I am gravely concerned at the escalating situation and violent protests in Noumea.
- Constructive dialogue is needed between the parties. We call for calm to enable talks to resume.



- The New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade is responding to the situation in New Caledonia, and the Consulate-General in Noumea has been in contact with a number of New Zealanders in New Caledonia who have sought advice about the current unrest.
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia are advised to avoid all protests and demonstrations. New Zealanders are also advised to monitor local media for developments and comply with any instructions and restrictions issued by the local authorities.
- Local authorities have recommended that individuals stay in place and limit their movements wherever possible.
- We recommend that all travellers check with their airline for any updates on flight bookings. Travellers should also contact their travel insurance provider if travel has been disrupted.
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia are urged to register on SafeTravel <https://www.safetravel.govt.nz/register-your-travel> as that is how we will provide updates and advice. New Zealanders in need of consular assistance can contact the 24/7 Consular Emergency line on +64 99 20 20 20.
- Further information can be found on our website here: [New Caledonia: Ongoing Protests and Civil Unrest | SafeTravel](#).
- There are currently 170 New Zealanders registered on SafeTravel as being in New Caledonia.
- [If raised: the question of independence is one for the people of New Caledonia to decide with France, not one for New Zealand. We acknowledge that the political and economic situation in New Caledonia is challenging and reiterate calls on all Parties to find a solution. We hope that peace and calm will prevail.]

## **MUTU – ENDS**

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**From:** [Noumea.Intel](#)  
**To:** [...NOU-INT](#); [...NOU-EXT](#)  
**Cc:** [Noumea.AssistedDepartures](#); [Noumea.ConsularRM](#); [Noumea.Controller](#); [Noumea.Intel](#); [Noumea.Logistics](#); [Noumea.MinLiaison](#); [Noumea.Planning](#); [Noumea.ResponseManager](#); [Noumea.Roster](#)  
**Subject:** NEW CALEDONIA UNREST - SITREP 5  
**Date:** Thursday, 16 May 2024 7:54:41 pm

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[RESTRICTED]

Kia ora koutou

Please find SitRep 5 below and as a link: [http://o-wln-gdm/Functions/RiskManagement/ECCEmergencyResponse/\\_layouts/15/DocIdRedirect.aspx?ID=RISK-2083728626-6](http://o-wln-gdm/Functions/RiskManagement/ECCEmergencyResponse/_layouts/15/DocIdRedirect.aspx?ID=RISK-2083728626-6)

## SitRep 5: New Caledonia Unrest – Thursday 16 May

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### **Key media messages**

#### *Political situation*

- We are gravely concerned at the escalating situation.
- The escalating situation and violent protests in Noumea are of serious concern across the Pacific Islands region.
- The immediate priority must be for all sides to take steps to de-escalate the situation and have constructive dialogue. We call for calm to enable talks to resume.
- *[If raised: independence of New Caledonia]* The question of independence is one for the people of New Caledonia to decide with France. We acknowledge that the political and economic situation in New Caledonia is challenging and reiterate calls on all Parties to find a solution. We hope that peace and calm will prevail.
- s6(a) The immediate priority must be for all sides to take steps to de-escalate the situation, so that there can be dialogue and calm. No matter your views on the political arrangements in New Caledonia, everyone should agree that violence is harmful to every community there.

#### *Consular response*

- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade has activated its emergency crisis system to respond to the situation in New Caledonia. Consular officials are in regular contact with impacted New Zealanders, New Caledonia authorities, and our international partners.
- 206 New Zealanders are currently registered with SafeTravel. New Zealanders in New Caledonia are urged to register on SafeTravel.
- An in-person meeting was held for a large group of New Zealanders in Noumea today [Thursday 16 May]. Consular officials are also proactively attempting to contact all registered New Zealanders in New Caledonia. Regular SafeTravel messages are also being sent to New Zealanders.
- We are speaking regularly with New Caledonia authorities regarding airport operations and access, and ongoing needs in relation to critical supplies such

as food and medicine.

- New Zealanders in New Caledonia should avoid all protests, monitor local media for developments, and comply with any instructions and restrictions issued by local authorities.
- Local authorities have recommended that individuals stay in place and limit their movements wherever possible.
- At present, with the Tontouta international airport closed, there is no safe way to leave New Caledonia.
- We recommend that all travellers check with their airline for any updates on flight bookings. Travellers should also contact their travel insurance provider if travel has been disrupted.
- New Zealanders in need of immediate consular assistance should contact the 24/7 Consular Emergency line on +64 99 20 20 20.
- *[If raised: assisted departures]* We've been advised by local authorities that reopening the airport is a top priority - our advice remains that New Zealanders who are in New Caledonia and wish to leave should take up commercial options when the airport reopens.

## Media comments by other Leaders

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- President Macron strongly condemned the "inacceptable violence, destruction, intimidation and assaults against persons, property and law enforcement agents" that has taken place in New Caledonia for the past three days. Macron has sent an invitation by way of a letter, to New Caledonia's politicians, for a meeting in Paris.
- French Prime Minister Gabriel Attal, speaking before the National Assembly on Tuesday, underlined the opportunity for those talks to resume and called on New Caledonia's parties to "seize the opportunity of this extended hand" to resume dialogue. "Only dialogue will allow us to appease tensions. Our hand remains extended. We need an inclusive political solution that can satisfy all stakeholders and that's why we are offering New Caledonian leaders to discuss and build together the future of New Caledonia", he told Parliament during question time.
- Vanuatu's prime minister, Charlot Salwai (also chairman of the Melanesian Spearhead Group, which also includes Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands) said the indiscriminate destruction of property would affect New Caledonia's economy in a big way and have a cascading effect on the lives of all New Caledonians, including Kanaks. He said France should establish dialogue with FLNKS, which has condemned the violence, and annul the constitutional reform that sparked the crisis. "These events could have been avoided if the French government had listened."
- French High Commissioner in Noumea Louis Le Franc said in a televised news conference the protesters were causing a "dire situation" for medicine and food for the population. He said main and secondary roads in Noumea were blocked by barricades with burning cars and car carcasses, some with booby traps.
- Australia's foreign affairs minister, Penny Wong, said Australians were advised to reconsider their need to travel to New Caledonia due to "civil unrest, travel disruption and limited essential services". "Again I repeat and take this opportunity to repeat Australia's call for calm. We respect and support the referendum process ... and the discussions under way between all parties, and encourage all parties to work together cooperatively to shape the future of New Caledonia."

## Latest developments

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### *Key developments*

#### *In Noumea*

- News agencies have reported the Chambre des Metiers, an important business association, has been targeted by arson.
- The French High Commissioner has warned of a looming food shortage.
- Most stores in the area are pretty much empty and shops in some outer suburbs which have been looted and burnt.
- New Caledonia produces around 15% of its own food needs, the rest is imported. Almost none of this would be produced within the Noumea area, so there are likely to be internal distribution issues.

s6(a)

#### *New Zealand's response*

- Minister of Foreign Affairs issued a press release on 16 May on the situation in New Caledonia: "NZ calls for calm, constructive dialogue in New Caledonia". [Read here](#).
- Requests for media interviews have come to MFAT. MFA will take the lead on media responses. MFA is addressing questions about the situation from his travelling media delegation as they arise.
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade has stood up an Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC). The objectives of the ECC are to support the consular response; manage information flows; provide support to Post and ensure policy cohesion as the situation evolves.
- The ECC will operate from Thursday 16 May 8am-7pm daily and through the weekend.

New Zealand has raised the situation in New Caledonia with the French in both WLG and PAR.

• s6(b)(i)

• s6(a)

s6(b)(i)

### Consular

- MFAT has upgraded SafeTravel alert level to Level 3 (out of 4) for the whole of New Caledonia "**Avoid non-essential travel**" in New Caledonia due to ongoing civil unrest.
- Australia has also raised its own travel advisory level for Noumea.
- 206 New Zealander's are now registered on Safe Travel. Of those who wish to depart:
  - 81 are due to leave on 18 May (provided airport operations commence and access is possible by then, which looks highly doubtful);
  - 13 are due to leave on 19 May;
  - 28 are due to leave on 20 May;
  - 3 are due to leave on 21 May;
  - 10 due to leave on on 25 May.
- The Consulate General in Noumea has been advised that others currently scheduled to leave later will likely want to bring forward their departure date.
- s9(2)(a)
- A senior Ministry official met with over 50 New Zealanders staying at the Chateau Royal, Other Kiwis travelled to the hotel for the briefing. This was well received and enabled MFAT to provide an update on how New Zealand was responding to the situation. While many of this group have flight bookings for the coming days, there were a range of questions about the Government's contingency planning should the situation worsen and flight disruption continue. There will be another meeting with the group tomorrow at 2pm local time (3pm NZT).

### *The possibility of consular/assisted departure flights*

- MFAT is encouraging New Zealanders to take advantage of spare capacity on scheduled commercial flights in the coming days/early next week if they wish to depart Noumea. Australia is providing the same advice to its citizens.
- For contingency purposes, however, officials are exploring potential NZDF deployment options should air assets be needed. Advice is being prepared for the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence to consider on Friday 17 May.

### *Request/offers of assistance*

- New Zealand has not received any official requests for assistance from France, s6(a)

### *Diplomatic outreach*

New Zealand has formal consular obligations to Switzerland, Netherlands, and Samoa. s6(a)

- s6(b)(i)

- s6(b)(i)

- s6(b)(i)

s6(b)(i)

*Staff welfare*

- Five staff are currently at the Consulate General in Noumea working remotely. All reported safe and well. MFAT head office is in regular contact and considering options for surge assistance in the coming days (should air travel allow).

## Background

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s6(a)

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Nga Mihi,

Noumea Intelligence Function

Noumea ECC

[Noumea.Intel@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.Intel@mfat.govt.nz)

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**From:** [Noumea.Intel](#)  
**To:** [NOUMEA](#); [PACPE](#); [DCE](#); [...PACIFIC POSTS](#); [DS AAG](#); [DS EMA](#); [DS MLG](#); [AUS](#); [EUR](#); [ISED](#); [SORD Security](#); [CON](#); [PARIS](#); [FM.P/S MFA \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.P/S Associate MFA \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.Defence \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.DPMC \(FPA\) \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.Police \(Seemail\)](#); s6(a) [FM.Police \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.Customs Service \(Seemail\)](#); [PACMM](#); [PACREG](#); [PHM](#); [DEVPP](#); [DEVCCU](#)  
**Cc:** ["SCMU@dpmc.govt.nz"](#); [Noumea.ResponseManager](#); [Noumea.Controller](#); [Noumea.MinLiaison](#); [Noumea.ConsularRM](#)  
**Subject:** FORMAL MESSAGE - SITREP 6: New Caledonia Unrest - Friday 17 May  
**Date:** Friday, 17 May 2024 11:21:00 am

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## SitRep 6: New Caledonia Unrest – Friday 17 May

### **Key media messages**

- There are currently 209 New Zealanders registered on SafeTravel as being in New Caledonia.
- We are gravely concerned at the serious situation.
- The situation and violent protests in Noumea are of serious concern across the Pacific Islands region.
- *[If raised: independence of New Caledonia]* The question of independence is one for the people of New Caledonia to decide with France. We acknowledge that the political and economic situation in New Caledonia is challenging and reiterate calls on all Parties to find a solution. We hope that peace and calm will prevail.
- s6(a) The immediate priority must be for all sides to take steps to de-escalate the situation, so that there can be dialogue and calm. No matter your views on the political arrangements in New Caledonia, everyone should agree that violence is harmful to every community there.
- *[If asked about assisted departures]* We've been advised by local authorities that reopening the airport is a top priority. However, it's a rapidly changing situation on the ground, and all possibilities are being considered to help New Zealanders leave New Caledonia.

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### **Developments**

#### *In Noumea*

- The situation stabilised over night and was globally calmer.
- Reinforcements have arrived from France and will keep arriving during the day. A further 1000 gendarmes and police are expected over the next 24 hours.
- The airport is likely to remain closed over the weekend. s6(b)(i)
- The French High Commission confirmed also that 47 containers of food arrived on a ship yesterday, a further 56 containers are expected to arrive today (these contain food and medications). Hotels are expecting to be restocked today through the gendarmes, however distribution and transport of the items to local shops remains unclear, particularly for the worst impacted areas.
- We are aware of pharmacies being open and we are aware of New Zealanders have been able to secure medication including NZ consular cases. There is concern about shortage of supplies in the hospital, including blood.
- Another gendarme has died – this was confirmed late on Thursday night. Reportedly result of friendly fire. This brings the death toll to 5. A body was also found in Noumea harbour – the circumstances of this death are not yet clear and may be unrelated.
- In his press conference yesterday, the French High Commissioner noted that the route to the airport remains unpassable. The High Commissioner said he would much prefer that tourists are stuck in their hotels, than risk their lives trying to get to the airport. [Note – this is why the airport remains closed]

- The French Armed Forces have been tasked with establishing an airbridge between Tontouta airport and the domestic airport Magenta.
- The High Commissioner estimated that there were likely around 4,000 people actively involved in the riots in the greater Noumea area. Most of these are between 15 and 25 years old.
- Local residents in many suburbs are organising themselves into "militias" and have set up barricades on the roads and are controlling access into and out of the street. This is making movement around the city more difficult. Many of these groups will likely have guns.

#### *In France*

- President Emmanuel Macron has invited Parties from New Caledonia to Paris to participate in dialogue and some have indicated they would take up this invitation. However, s6(a)

#### *New Zealand's response*

- Minister of Foreign Affairs undertook two interviews this morning on [RNZ's Morning Report](#) and [Mike Hosking's Breakfast](#).

#### **Consular response**

- 209 New Zealanders are currently registered with SafeTravel. As of 10am Friday 17 May, 135 are booked to leave in the next week. New Zealanders in New Caledonia are urged to register on SafeTravel.
  - New Zealanders in New Caledonia should stay in place and avoid all protests, monitor local media for developments, and comply with any instructions and restrictions issued by local authorities.
  - s9(2)(a)
- Welfare
- checks are being conducted by Post and Consular Call Centre staff to monitor particular individuals.
- New Zealand's current travel alert level for all of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential travel** (Level 3 of 4), which was upgraded on 16 May 2024. This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.

## ANNEX: SitRep 6: New Caledonia Unrest – Friday 17 May

### **Key media messages**

#### *Political situation*

- There are currently 209 New Zealanders registered on SafeTravel as being in New Caledonia.
- We are gravely concerned at the s6(a) **serious** situation.
- The s6(a) situation and violent protests in Noumea are of serious concern across the Pacific Islands region.
- The immediate priority must be for all sides to take steps to de-escalate the situation and have constructive dialogue. We call for calm to enable talks to resume.
- *[If raised: independence of New Caledonia]* The question of independence is one for the people of New Caledonia to decide with France. We acknowledge that the political and economic situation in New Caledonia is challenging and reiterate calls on all Parties to find a solution. We hope that peace and calm will prevail.
- s6(a) The immediate



priority must be for all sides to take steps to de-escalate the situation, so that there can be dialogue and calm. No matter your views on the political arrangements in New Caledonia, everyone should agree that violence is harmful to every community there.

- *[If asked about assisted departures]* We've been advised by local authorities that reopening the airport is a top priority - our advice remains that New Zealanders who are in New Caledonia and wish to leave should take up commercial options when the airport reopens.
- *[If asked about the airport opening]* It's a rapidly changing situation on the ground, and all possibilities are being considered to help New Zealanders leave New Caledonia.

#### Consular response

- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade has activated its emergency crisis system to respond to the situation in New Caledonia. Consular officials are in regular contact with impacted New Zealanders, New Caledonia authorities, and our international partners.
- 209 New Zealanders are currently registered with SafeTravel. New Zealanders in New Caledonia are urged to register on SafeTravel.
- An in-person meeting was held for a large group of New Zealanders in Noumea **yesterday** [Thursday 16 May]. Consular officials are also proactively attempting to contact all registered New Zealanders in New Caledonia. Regular SafeTravel messages are also being sent to New Zealanders.
- We are speaking regularly with New Caledonian authorities regarding airport operations and access, and ongoing needs in relation to critical supplies such as food and medicine.
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia should **stay in place and** avoid all protests, monitor local media for developments, and comply with any instructions and restrictions issued by local authorities.
- s9(2)(a)  
Welfare checks are being conducted by Post **and** Consular ECC call centre staff to monitor particular individuals.
- New Zealand's current travel alert level **for all** of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential travel (Level 3 of 4)**, which was upgraded on 16 May 2024. This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.
- At present, with the Tontouta international airport closed, there is no safe way to leave New Caledonia.
- We recommend that all travellers check with their airline for any updates on flight bookings. Travellers should also contact their travel insurance provider if travel has been disrupted.
- New Zealanders in need of immediate consular assistance should contact the 24/7 Consular Emergency line on +64 99 20 20 20.
- *[If asked about assisted departures]* We've been advised by local authorities that reopening the airport is a top priority - our advice remains that New Zealanders who are in New Caledonia and wish to leave should take up commercial options when the airport reopens.
- *[If asked about the airport opening]* It's a rapidly changing situation on the ground, and all possibilities are being considered to help New Zealanders leave New Caledonia.

#### Media comments by other Leaders

- President Macron strongly condemned the "inacceptable violence, destruction,

intimidation and assaults against persons, property and law enforcement agents" that has taken place in New Caledonia for the past three days. Macron has sent an invitation by way of a letter, to New Caledonia's politicians, for a meeting in Paris.

- French Prime Minister Gabriel Attal, "Everything is being done to restore order and calm that Caledonians deserve," after a meeting at the presidential palace on Wednesday. He said the situation "remains very tense, with looting, riots, arson and attacks, which are unbearable and unspeakable". Speaking before the National Assembly on Tuesday, underlined the opportunity for those talks to resume and called on New Caledonia's parties to "seize the opportunity of this extended hand" to resume dialogue. "Only dialogue will allow us to appease tensions. Our hand remains extended. We need an inclusive political solution that can satisfy all stakeholders and that's why we are offering New Caledonian leaders to discuss and build together the future of New Caledonia", he told Parliament during question time.
- French Home Affairs and Overseas minister Gérald Darmanin told public TV channel France 2 he had placed 10 leaders of the CCAT (an organisation linked with FLNKS) under home detention. "This is a Mafia-like body which I do not amalgamate with political pro-independence parties...[CCAT] is a group that claims itself to be pro-independence and commits looting, murders and violence," "I have numerous elements which show this is a Mafia-like, violent organisation that loots stores and shoots real bullets at (French) gendarmes, sets businesses on fire and attacks even pro-independence institutions." "Massive reinforcements were to arrive shortly and the French state would "totally regain control", he said.
- The National Council of Chiefs of the Indigenous Kanak condemned "all acts of vandalism and gun violence", but rejected the allegations that the pro-independence movement was involved in the deadly violence. Grand Chief Hippolyte Sinewami-Htamumu expressed full support for the pro-independence group, which has mobilised more than a hundred thousand people "of all ages and from all backgrounds" in peaceful protests in recent months in the capital, Nouméa, and throughout the island. "This is not a 'terrorist group' or 'mafia group', as certain political leaders want us to believe."
- Leaders of a Kanak Workers Union in Paris appealed for calm and said they were deeply saddened by deaths in their faraway homeland. "We wish to see the French government make a strong political statement rather than send troops," union leader Rock Haocas told reporters. "Starting a conversation would be a strong political statement."
- Cook Islands Prime Minister Mark Brown [and outgoing PIF Chair] said greater autonomy for the indigenous Kanak population is needed. "If there's one thing that specific countries value, it is the sovereignty and independence. To be able to have control over the destiny of your own country." "My initial view of the unrest that's occurring in Caledonia, it is cause to recognise greater autonomy and greater independence from the people on those islands. "As a member of the Forum now, we will be able to provide support assistance to these member countries as to the best way forward without trying to try to avoid any escalation of conflict."
- Henry Puna, outgoing secretary-general of the Pacific Islands Forum told journalists at his final news conference that "to see the collapse [and], protesting is very unfortunate", but it was predictable. He said the issue "has been boiling" since the 2021 independence referendum in the French territory, the third and final vote under the Nouméa Accord, which was boycotted by the pro-indigenous Kanak population. He said he was there in December 2021 to monitor the independence referendum when it was taken and "it was unfortunate that it was allowed to go ahead during that time". "We were in the middle of [the] Covid [pandemic] and the Kanak custom is that when somebody passes the mourn that for one year. So they weren't allowed that freedom. "As a result, they didn't want to take part in the referendum because they couldn't go against their tradition and go campaigning or do other work. That's disrespectful for the custom."
- Vanuatu's prime minister, Charlot Salwai (also chairman of the Melanesian Spearhead Group, which also includes Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands) said the indiscriminate destruction of property would affect New Caledonia's economy in a big way and have a cascading effect on the lives of all New Caledonians, including Kanaks. He said France should establish dialogue with

FLNKS, which has condemned the violence, and annul the constitutional reform that sparked the crisis. "These events could have been avoided if the French government had listened."

- French High Commissioner in Noumea Louis Le Franc said in a televised news conference the protesters were causing a "dire situation" for medicine and food for the population. He said main and secondary roads in Noumea were blocked by barricades with burning cars and car carcasses, some with booby traps.
- Australia's foreign affairs minister, Penny Wong, said Australians were advised to reconsider their need to travel to New Caledonia due to "civil unrest, travel disruption and limited essential services". "Again I repeat and take this opportunity to repeat Australia's call for calm. We respect and support the referendum process ... and the discussions under way between all parties, and encourage all parties to work together cooperatively to shape the future of New Caledonia."
- Labour Party Deputy Leader Carmel Sepuloni the growing unrest was a concern. At last year's Pacific Leaders Forum, French Polynesian representatives were already expressing concern about how some policies from the French government might affect its indigenous population, she said.

## Latest developments

### *Key developments*

#### *In Noumea*

- News agencies have reported the Chambre des Metiers, an important business association, has been targeted by arson.
- The French High Commissioner has warned of a looming food shortage.
- Most stores in the area are pretty much empty and shops in some outer suburbs which have been looted and burnt.
- New Caledonia produces around 15% of its own food needs, the rest is imported. Almost none of this would be produced within the Noumea area, so there are likely to be internal distribution issues.
- Another gendarme has died – this was confirmed late on Thursday night. Reportedly result of friendly fire. This brings the death toll to 5. A body was also found in Noumea harbour – the circumstances of this death are not yet clear and may be unrelated.
- In his press conference yesterday, the French High Commissioner noted that the route to the airport remains unpassable – there are reportedly improvised explosive devices that have been placed using gas cannisters and nails. Speaking specifically about tourists, the High Commissioner said he would much prefer that tourists are stuck in their hotels, than risk their lives trying to get to the airport. [Note – this is why the airport remains closed]
- The French Armed Forces have been tasked with establishing an airbridge between Tontouta and the domestic airport Magenta (which is also closed, and is located in an area that has continued to be targeted by rioters setting the surrounding car yards on fire).
- French High Commission confirmed also that 47 containers of food arrived on a ship in Noumea harbour yesterday, a further 56 containers are expected to arrive today (these contain food and medications). Distribution and transport of the items to local shops remains unclear, particularly for the worst impacted areas.
- There is concern about shortage of supplies in the hospital, including blood.
- The High Commissioner estimated that there were likely around 4,000 people actively involved in the riots in the greater Noumea area. Most of these are between 15 and 25 years old.
- Local residents in many suburbs (including those where the HOP and DHOP residences are located) are organising themselves into "militias" and have set up

barricades on the roads and are controlling access into and out of the street (especially in the evenings/overnight). This is making movement around the city more difficult. Many of these groups will likely have guns [note: there are 76,000 registered/declared firearms in New Caledonia, for a population of 270,000 people.]

s6(b)(i)

#### *New Zealand's response*

- Minister of Foreign Affairs undertook two interviews this morning on [RNZ's Morning Report](#) and [Mike Hosking's Breakfast](#).
- Minister of Foreign Affairs issued a press release on 16 May on the situation in New Caledonia: "NZ calls for calm, constructive dialogue in New Caledonia". [Read here](#).
- Requests for media interviews have come to MFAT. MFA will take the lead on media responses. MFA is addressing questions about the situation from his travelling media delegation as they arise.
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade has stood up an Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC). The objectives of the ECC are to support the consular response; manage information flows; provide support to Post and ensure policy cohesion as the situation evolves.
- The ECC will operate from Thursday 16 May 8am-7pm daily and through the weekend. EC emails now up and running. Please direct emails to:
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  - Response manager [Noumea.ResponseManager@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.ResponseManager@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Consular response manager [Noumea.ConsularRM@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.ConsularRM@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Intel [Noumea.Intel@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.Intel@mfat.govt.nz)
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- New Zealand has raised the situation in New Caledonia with the French in both WLG and PAR.
- s6(a), s6(b)(i)
- s6(a), s6(b)(i)

#### *Consular*

- MFAT has upgraded SafeTravel alert level to Level 3 (out of 4) for the whole of New Caledonia "**Avoid non-essential travel**" in New Caledonia due to ongoing civil unrest.
- Australia has also raised its own travel advisory level for Noumea.

- 209 New Zealander's are now registered on Safe Travel. As of 10am 17 May, 135 are booked to leave in the next week.
- The Consulate General in Noumea has been advised that others currently scheduled to leave later will likely want to bring forward their departure date.
- s9(2)(a)
- A senior Ministry official met with over 50 New Zealanders staying at the Chateau Royal, Other Kiwis travelled to the hotel for the briefing. This was well received and enabled MFAT to provide an update on how New Zealand was responding to the situation. While many of this group have flight bookings for the coming days, there were a range of questions about the Government's contingency planning should the situation worsen and flight disruption continue. There will be another meeting with the group tomorrow at 2pm local time (3pm NZT).

*The possibility of consular/assisted departure flights*

- MFAT is encouraging New Zealanders to take advantage of spare capacity on scheduled commercial flights in the coming days/early next week if they wish to depart Noumea. Australia is providing the same advice to its citizens.
- For contingency purposes, however, officials are exploring potential NZDF deployment options should air assets be needed. Advice is being prepared for the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence to consider on Friday 17 May.

*Request/offers of assistance*

- New Zealand has not received any official requests for assistance from s6(a), s6(b)(i)

*Diplomatic outreach*

- s6(a)
- New Zealand has formal consular obligations to Switzerland, Netherlands, and Samoa. s6(a)
- s6(b)(i)
- s6(b)(i)
- s6(b)(i)

*Staff welfare*

- Five staff are currently at the Consulate General in Noumea working remotely. All reported safe and well. MFAT head office is in regular contact and considering options for surge assistance in the coming days (should air travel allow).

**Background**

s6(a)

Released under the Official Information Act

**From:** [Noumea.Intel](#)  
**To:** [NOUMEA](#); [PACPF](#); [DCE](#); [...PACIFIC POSTS](#); [DS AAG](#); [DS EMA](#); [DS MLG](#); [AUS](#); [EUR](#); [ISED](#); [SORD Security](#); [CON](#); [PARIS](#); [FM.P/S MFA \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.P/S Associate MFA \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.Defence \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.DPMC \(FPA\) \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.Police \(Seemail\)](#); [s6\(a\)](#) [FM.Police \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.Customs Service \(Seemail\)](#); [PACMM](#); [PACREG](#); [PHM](#); [DEVPR](#); [DEVFCO](#); [...EUROPEAN POSTS](#)  
**Cc:** ["SCMU@dpmc.govt.nz"](#); ["fiona.dally@mbie.govt.nz"](#); ["chris.shaw@mbie.govt.nz"](#); [Noumea.ResponseManager](#); [Noumea.Controller](#); [Noumea.MinLiaison](#); [Noumea.ConsularRM](#); [Noumea.AssistedDepartures](#); [Noumea.Logistics](#); [Noumea.Planning](#); [Noumea.Intel](#)  
**Subject:** FORMAL MESSAGE - SITREP 7: New Caledonia Unrest - Friday 17 May  
**Date:** Friday, 17 May 2024 5:35:00 pm

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## Executive Summary SitRep 7: New Caledonia Unrest – Friday 17 May

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### **Key media messages**

- There are currently 219 New Zealanders registered on SafeTravel as being in New Caledonia.
- New Zealand is seriously concerned about the situation and violent protests in Noumea.
- *[If raised: independence of New Caledonia]* The question of independence is one for the people of New Caledonia to decide with France. We acknowledge that the political and economic situation in New Caledonia is challenging and reiterate calls on all Parties to find a solution. We hope that peace and calm will prevail.
- [s6\(a\)](#) The immediate priority must be for all sides to take steps to de-escalate the situation, so that there can be dialogue and calm. No matter your views on the political arrangements in New Caledonia, everyone should agree that violence is harmful to every community there.
- *[If asked about assisted departures]* We've been advised by local authorities that reopening the airport is a top priority. However, it's a rapidly changing situation on the ground, and all possibilities are being considered to help New Zealanders leave New Caledonia.
- *[If asked why the Consulate in Noumea is closed]* The Consulate-General is open, and all staff are working on this response. Because of the limitations on movements, staff are currently working remotely. Callers to the Consulate General are being directed to the 24/7 emergency Line.
- *[If raised: PIF Members and Secretariat comments on crisis]* We recognise and share the concern felt among PIF Members at the recent violence. We engage in a consistent manner with all Forum Members, including New Caledonia, on PIF matters and put high value on the centrality and unity of the PIF. It is for individual countries to make their own assessments on the situation in New Caledonia. New Zealand has been very clear on the need for all sides to take steps to de-escalate, so that there can be dialogue and calm.

[s6\(a\)](#)

[s9\(2\)\(g\)\(i\)](#)

### ***In Noumea***

- The main Tontouta airport will remain closed until at least 9am on Tuesday 21 May. The New Caledonian Government who is responsible for commercial flights (as opposed to security which is a French jurisdiction) has confirmed that re-establishing commercial flights is their priority once the road has been reopened.
- The local government has announced there is enough food in the territory to last two months. However, we have not had confirmation as to whether hotels

have been restocked today through the gendarmes, and distribution and transport of the items to local shops remains unclear, particularly for the worst impacted areas.

- s6(a)
- In his press conference yesterday, the French High Commissioner noted that the route to the airport remains unpassable. The High Commissioner said he would much prefer that tourists are stuck in their hotels, than risk their lives trying to get to the airport. [Note – this is why the airport remains closed]
- The French Armed Forces have been tasked with establishing an airbridge between Tontouta airport and the domestic airport Magenta.

#### *In France*

- President Emmanuel Macron has invited Parties from New Caledonia to Paris to participate in dialogue and some have indicated they would take up this invitation. s6(a)
- **Azerbaijan interference** s6(a) France has publicly announced it has detected online activity showing that the unrest in New Caledonia had been actively amplified and supported by Azerbaijan.
- s6(a)
- s6(b)(i)
- s6(a)
- Azerbaijan has rejected the claims.

#### *New Zealand's response*

- Minister of Foreign Affairs did three interviews this morning on [RNZ's Morning Report](#), [Mike Hosking's Breakfast](#), and Newshub, which will air on the 6pm news.
- While in Vanuatu, the Minister addressed the situation in a press conference. Video was published on [NZ Herald](#).
- The Ministry has requested a call between MFA and French Foreign Minister Sejourne, s6(a)
- s6(a)

#### **Consular response**

- 219 New Zealanders are currently registered with SafeTravel. As of 10am Friday 17 May, 135 are booked to leave in the next week. New Zealanders in New Caledonia are urged to register on SafeTravel to receive direct messages from consular officials.
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia should stay in place and avoid all protests, monitor local media for developments, and comply with any instructions and restrictions issued by local authorities.
- Welfare checks are being conducted by Post and Consular Call Centre staff to monitor particular individuals.
- s9(2)(a)



s9(2)(a)

- New Zealand's current travel alert level for all of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential travel** (Level 3 of 4), which was upgraded on 16 May 2024. This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.

## ANNEX: Full SitRep 6: New Caledonia Unrest – Friday 17 May

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### Key media messages

#### *Political situation*

- There are currently 219 New Zealanders registered on SafeTravel as being in New Caledonia.
- **New Zealand is** seriously concerned about the situation and violent protests in Noumea.
- The immediate priority must be for all sides to take steps to de-escalate the situation and have constructive dialogue. We call for calm to enable talks to resume.
- *[If raised: independence of New Caledonia]* The question of independence is one for the people of New Caledonia to decide with France. We acknowledge that the political and economic situation in New Caledonia is challenging and reiterate calls on all Parties to find a solution. We hope that peace and calm will prevail.
- s6(a) The immediate priority must be for all sides to take steps to de-escalate the situation, so that there can be dialogue and calm. No matter your views on the political arrangements in New Caledonia, everyone should agree that violence is harmful to every community there.
- *[If asked about assisted departures]* We've been advised by local authorities that reopening the airport is a top priority. However, it's a rapidly changing situation on the ground, and all possibilities are being considered to help New Zealanders leave New Caledonia.
- *[If raised: PIF Members and Secretariat comments on crisis]* The Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) is the region's pre-eminent political entity and it is understandable that Forum Members and the PIF Secretariat are following developments in New Caledonia closely. We recognise and share the concern felt among Forum Members at the recent violence. We engage in a consistent manner with all Forum Members, including New Caledonia, on PIF matters and put high value on the centrality and unity of the PIF. It is for individual countries to make their own assessments on the situation in New Caledonia. New Zealand has been very clear on the need for all sides to take steps to de-escalate, so that there can be dialogue and calm.

s6(a)

#### *Consular response*

- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade has activated its emergency crisis system to respond to the situation in New Caledonia. Consular officials are in regular contact with impacted New Zealanders, New Caledonia authorities, and our international partners.
- There are currently 219 New Zealanders registered on SafeTravel as being in New Caledonia. New Zealanders in New Caledonia are urged to register on SafeTravel **to receive direct messages from consular officials.**

- An in-person meeting was held for a large group of New Zealanders in Noumea yesterday [Thursday 16 May] **and further meetings are taking place today.** Consular officials are also proactively attempting to contact registered New Zealanders in New Caledonia to **check on their situations, and any specific health or welfare concerns.**
  - We are speaking regularly with New Caledonian authorities regarding airport operations and access, and ongoing needs in relation to critical supplies such as food and medicine.
  - New Zealanders in New Caledonia should stay in place and avoid all protests, monitor local media for developments, and comply with any instructions and restrictions issued by local authorities.
  - s9(2)(a)
- Welfare checks are being conducted by our staff both in Noumea and Wellington to monitor particular individuals.**
- New Zealand's current travel alert level for all of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential travel** (Level 3 of 4), which was upgraded on 16 May 2024. This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.
  - At present, with the Tontouta international airport **remaining** closed, there is no safe way to leave New Caledonia.
  - We recommend that all travellers check with their airline for any updates on flight bookings. Travellers should also contact their travel insurance provider if travel has been disrupted.
  - New Zealanders in need of immediate consular assistance should contact the 24/7 Consular Emergency line on +64 99 20 20 20.
  - **[If asked about assisted departures] We've been advised by local authorities that reopening the airport is a top priority. However, it's a rapidly changing situation on the ground, and all possibilities are being considered to help New Zealanders leave New Caledonia.**
  - **[If asked why the Consulate in Noumea is closed] The Consulate-General is open, and all staff are working on this response. Because of the limitations on movements, staff are currently working remotely. Callers to the Consulate General are being directed to the 24/7 emergency Line.**

## Media comments by other Leaders

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- President Macron strongly condemned the "inacceptable violence, destruction, intimidation and assaults against persons, property and law enforcement agents" that has taken place in New Caledonia for the past three days. Macron has sent an invitation by way of a letter, to New Caledonia's politicians, for a meeting in Paris.
- French Prime Minister Gabriel Attal, "Everything is being done to restore order and calm that Caledonians deserve," after a meeting at the presidential palace on Wednesday. He said the situation "remains very tense, with looting, riots, arson and attacks, which are unbearable and unspeakable". Speaking before the National Assembly on Tuesday, underlined the opportunity for those talks to resume and called on New Caledonia's parties to "seize the opportunity of this extended hand" to resume dialogue. "Only dialogue will allow us to appease tensions. Our hand remains extended. We need an inclusive political solution that can satisfy all stakeholders and that's why we are offering New Caledonian leaders to discuss and build together the future of New Caledonia", he told Parliament during question time.
- French Home Affairs and Overseas minister Gérald Darmanin told public TV channel France 2 he had placed 10 leaders of the CCAT (an organisation linked with FLNKS) under home detention. "This is a Mafia-like body which I do not amalgamate with political pro-independence parties...[CCAT] is a group that claims itself to be pro-independence and commits looting, murders and violence," "I have numerous elements which show this is a Mafia-like, violent

organisation that loots stores and shoots real bullets at (French) gendarmes, sets businesses on fire and attacks even pro-independence institutions."

"Massive reinforcements were to arrive shortly and the French state would "totally regain control", he said.

- The National Council of Chiefs of the Indigenous Kanak condemned "all acts of vandalism and gun violence", but rejected the allegations that the pro-independence movement was involved in the deadly violence. Grand Chief Hippolyte Sinewami-Htamumu expressed full support for the pro-independence group, which has mobilised more than a hundred thousand people "of all ages and from all backgrounds" in peaceful protests in recent months in the capital, Nouméa, and throughout the island. "This is not a 'terrorist group' or 'mafia group', as certain political leaders want us to believe."
- Leaders of a Kanak Workers Union in Paris appealed for calm and said they were deeply saddened by deaths in their faraway homeland. "We wish to see the French government make a strong political statement rather than send troops," union leader Rock Haocas told reporters. "Starting a conversation would be a strong political statement."
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- Henry Puna, outgoing secretary-general of the Pacific Islands Forum told journalists at his final news conference that "to see the collapse [and], protesting is very unfortunate", but it was predictable. He said the issue "has been boiling" since the 2021 independence referendum in the French territory, the third and final vote under the Nouméa Accord, which was boycotted by the pro-indigenous Kanak population. He said he was there in December 2021 to monitor the independence referendum when it was taken and "it was unfortunate that it was allowed to go ahead during that time". "We were in the middle of [the] Covid [pandemic] and the Kanak custom is that when somebody passes the mourn that for one year. So they weren't allowed that freedom. "As a result, they didn't want to take part in the referendum because they couldn't go against their tradition and go campaigning or do other work. That's disrespectful for the custom."
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- French High Commissioner in Noumea Louis Le Franc said in a televised news conference the protesters were causing a "dire situation" for medicine and food for the population. He said main and secondary roads in Noumea were blocked by barricades with burning cars and car carcasses, some with booby traps.
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- Labour Party Deputy Leader Carmel Sepuloni the growing unrest was a concern. At last year's Pacific Leaders Forum, French Polynesian representatives were

already expressing concern about how some policies from the French government might affect its indigenous population, she said.

## Latest developments

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### *Key developments*

#### *In Noumea*

- News agencies have reported the Chambre des Metiers, an important business association, has been targeted by arson.
- The French High Commissioner has warned of a looming food shortage.
- Most stores in the area are pretty much empty and shops in some outer suburbs which have been looted and burnt.
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s6(a)

### **Azerbaijan interference** s6(a)

- France has publicly announced it has detected online activity showing that the unrest in New Caledonia had been actively amplified and supported by Azerbaijan.

s6(a)

s6(b)(i)

s6(b)(i)

s6(a)

- Azerbaijan has rejected the claims. The Foreign Ministry spokesman has said "Instead of accusing Azerbaijan of allegedly supporting pro-independence protests in New Caledonia, the Minister of the Interior of France should focus on his country's failed policy towards the overseas territories that led to such protests."
- In 2020, the French Senate passed a resolution calling for recognition of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. This was not adopted by the French government.

### *New Zealand's response*

- Minister of Foreign Affairs did three interviews this morning on [RNZ's Morning Report](#), [Mike Hosking's Breakfast](#), and [Newshub](#), which will air on the 6pm news.
- While in Vanuatu, the Minister addressed the situation in a press conference. Video was published on [NZ Herald](#).
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### *Request/offers of assistance*

- New Zealand has not received any official requests for assistance from France, s6(a)

### *Diplomatic outreach*

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- New Zealand has formal consular obligations to Switzerland, Netherlands, and Samoa. s6(a)
- s6(b)(i)

• s6(b)(i)

• s6(b)(i)

### *Staff welfare*

- Five staff are currently at the Consulate General in Noumea working remotely. All reported safe and well. MFAT head office is in regular contact and considering options for surge assistance in the coming days (should air travel allow).

## Background

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s6(a)

Released under the Official Information Act

s6(a)

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**From:** [Noumea.Intel](#)  
**To:** [NOUMEA](#); [PACPF](#); [DCE](#); [...PACIFIC POSTS](#); [DS AAG](#); [DS EMA](#); [DS MLG](#); [AUS](#); [EUR](#); [ISED](#); [SORD Security](#); [CON](#); [PARIS](#); [FM.P/S MFA \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.P/S Associate MFA \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.Defence \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.DPMC \(FPA\) \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.Police \(Seemail\)](#); [s6\(a\)](#) [FM.Police \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.Customs Service \(Seemail\)](#); [PACMM](#); [PACREG](#); [PHM](#); [DEVPP](#); [DEVCCO](#); [...EUROPEAN POSTS](#)  
**Cc:** [SCMU@dpmc.govt.nz](#); [fiona.dally@mbie.govt.nz](#); [chris.shaw@mbie.govt.nz](#); [Noumea.ResponseManager](#); [Noumea.Controller](#); [Noumea.MinLiaison](#); [Noumea.ConsularRM](#); [Noumea.AssistedDepartures](#); [Noumea.Logistics](#); [Noumea.Planning](#); [Noumea.Intel](#)  
**Subject:** FORMAL MESSAGE: SITREP 8: New Caledonia Unrest - Saturday 18 May  
**Date:** Saturday, 18 May 2024 11:07:56 am

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[RESTRICTED]

## Executive Summary SitRep 8: New Caledonia Unrest – Saturday 18 May

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### Key media messages

- There are currently 231 New Zealanders registered on SafeTravel as being in New Caledonia.
- New Zealand is seriously concerned about the situation and violent protests in Noumea.
- *[If raised: independence of New Caledonia]* The question of independence is one for the people of New Caledonia to decide with France. We acknowledge that the political and economic situation in New Caledonia is challenging and reiterate calls on all Parties to find a solution. We hope that peace and calm will prevail.
- s6(a) The immediate priority must be for all sides to take steps to de-escalate the situation, so that there can be dialogue and calm. No matter your views on the political arrangements in New Caledonia, everyone should agree that violence is harmful to every community there.
- *[If asked about assisted departures]* We've been advised by local authorities that reopening the airport is a top priority. However, it's a rapidly changing situation on the ground, and all possibilities are being considered to help New Zealanders leave New Caledonia.
- *[If asked why the Consulate in Noumea is closed]* The Consulate-General is open, and all staff are working on this response. Because of the limitations on movements, staff are currently working remotely. Callers to the Consulate General are being directed to the 24/7 emergency Line.
- *[If raised: PIF Members and Secretariat comments on crisis]* We recognise and share the concern felt among PIF Members at the recent violence. We engage in a consistent manner with all Forum Members, including New Caledonia, on PIF matters and put high value on the centrality and unity of the PIF. It is for individual countries to make their own assessments on the situation in New Caledonia. New Zealand has been very clear on the need for all sides to take steps to de-escalate, so that there can be dialogue and calm.
- s6(a)

-  
s9(2)(g)(i)

In Noumea

- The main Tontouta airport will remain closed until at least 9am on Tuesday 21 May. The New Caledonian Government who is responsible for commercial flights (as opposed to security which is a French jurisdiction) has confirmed that re-establishing commercial flights is their priority once the road has been re-opened.

- s6(a), s6(b)(i)

There are still outer suburbs of Noumea that remain largely unable to be accessed, including by police forces who are generally the target of the violence. These notably include suburbs that must be passed through in order to reach the airport. A "demining" exercise would need to be carried out before the safety of the roads could be guaranteed.

- The French Armed Forces have been tasked with securing the domestic Magenta airport, however, this has not yet been achieved. At around 5pm local time Friday, the military were attacked by rioters throwing hammers and stones. Security forces used tear gas and stun grenades in response. s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)
- The French High Commission has ordered that the curfew in place from 6pm to 6am will remain in force for the full duration of the state of emergency. The curfew has also been extended to the entire territory of New Caledonia (previous curfew was only in place for the wider Noumea area).
- Value of damages since the start of the civil unrest on Monday estimated at around XPF 24,000,000,000 (approx. NZD 357 million).
- The local government has announced there is enough food in the territory to last two months. However, we have not had confirmation as to whether hotels have been restocked today through the gendarmes, and distribution and transport of the items to local shops remains unclear, particularly for the worst impacted areas.

#### *In France*

- President Emmanuel Macron has invited Parties from New Caledonia to Paris to participate in dialogue and some have indicated they would take up this invitation.
- The videoconference that Emmanuel Macron had proposed with various actors will not be able to take place at this time, as they "do not wish to dialogue with each other for the moment", the Elysée Palace announced. Instead Macron will engage "directly with the elected representatives".

#### *New Zealand's response*

- Minister of Foreign Affairs did three interviews on Friday 17 May on [RNZ's Morning Report](#), [Mike Hosking's Breakfast](#), and [Newshub](#). He told Newshub MFAT officials are working on an assisted departures plan.
- The Ministry has requested calls between MFA and the French Foreign Minister Sejourne, the President of the Government of New Caledonia, incoming Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General Baron Waqa and current Forum Chair Mark Brown.
- MFA and the Defence Minister have approved preparations for an NZDF flight deployment options for managing assisted departures from Noumea. These contingent on receiving approvals from French and Noumea authorities. It is anticipated that it may be possible to operate an assisted departure from tomorrow Sunday 19 May, should approvals be received today.
- s6(a), s6(b)(i)

#### **Consular response**

- 231 New Zealanders are currently registered with SafeTravel. New Zealanders in New Caledonia are urged to register on SafeTravel to receive direct messages from consular officials.
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia should stay in place and avoid all protests, monitor local media for developments, and comply with any instructions and restrictions issued by local authorities.

- Welfare checks are being conducted by Post and Consular Call Centre staff to monitor particular individuals.
- New Zealand's current travel alert level for all of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential travel** (Level 3 of 4), which was upgraded on 16 May 2024. This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.

## ANNEX: Full SitRep 8: New Caledonia Unrest – Saturday 18 May

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### **Key media messages**

#### *Political situation*

- There are currently **231** New Zealanders registered on SafeTravel as being in New Caledonia.
- New Zealand is seriously concerned about the situation and violent protests in Noumea.
- The immediate priority must be for all sides to take steps to de-escalate the situation and have constructive dialogue. We call for calm to enable talks to resume.
- *[If raised: independence of New Caledonia]* The question of independence is one for the people of New Caledonia to decide with France. We acknowledge that the political and economic situation in New Caledonia is challenging and reiterate calls on all Parties to find a solution. We hope that peace and calm will prevail.
- s6(a) The immediate priority must be for all sides to take steps to de-escalate the situation, so that there can be dialogue and calm. No matter your views on the political arrangements in New Caledonia, everyone should agree that violence is harmful to every community there.
- *[If asked about assisted departures]* We've been advised by local authorities that reopening the airport is a top priority. However, it's a rapidly changing situation on the ground, and all possibilities are being considered to help New Zealanders leave New Caledonia.
- *[If raised: PIF Members and Secretariat comments on crisis]* The Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) is the region's pre-eminent political entity and it is understandable that Forum Members and the PIF Secretariat are following developments in New Caledonia closely. We recognise and share the concern felt among Forum Members at the recent violence. We engage in a consistent manner with all Forum Members, including New Caledonia, on PIF matters and put high value on the centrality and unity of the PIF. It is for individual countries to make their own assessments on the situation in New Caledonia. New Zealand has been very clear on the need for all sides to take steps to de-escalate, so that there can be dialogue and calm.
- s6(a)

#### *Consular response*

- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade has activated its emergency crisis system to respond to the situation in New Caledonia. Consular officials are in regular contact with impacted New Zealanders, New Caledonia authorities, and our international partners.
- There are currently **231** New Zealanders registered on SafeTravel as being in New Caledonia. New Zealanders in New Caledonia are urged to register on SafeTravel to receive direct messages from consular officials.

- **In-person meetings were** held for **several groups** of New Zealanders in Noumea Thursday 16 May and **yesterday [Friday 17 May]**. Consular officials are also proactively attempting to contact registered New Zealanders in New Caledonia to check on their situations, and any specific health or welfare concerns.
  - We are speaking regularly with New Caledonian authorities regarding airport operations and access, and ongoing needs in relation to critical supplies such as food and medicine.
  - New Zealanders in New Caledonia should stay in place and avoid all protests, monitor local media for developments, and comply with any instructions and restrictions issued by local authorities.
  - s9(2)(a)
- Welfare checks are being
- conducted by our staff both in Noumea and Wellington to monitor particular individuals.
- New Zealand's current travel alert level for all of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential travel** (Level 3 of 4), which was upgraded on 16 May 2024. This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.
  - At present, with the Tontouta international airport remaining closed, there is no safe way to leave New Caledonia.
  - We recommend that all travellers check with their airline for any updates on flight bookings. Travellers should also contact their travel insurance provider if travel has been disrupted.
  - New Zealanders in need of immediate consular assistance should contact the 24/7 Consular Emergency line on +64 99 20 20 20.
  - *[If asked about assisted departures]* We've been advised by local authorities that reopening the airport is a top priority. However, it's a rapidly changing situation on the ground, and all possibilities are being considered to help New Zealanders leave New Caledonia.
  - *[If asked why the Consulate in Noumea is closed]* The Consulate-General is open, and all staff are working on this response. Because of the limitations on movements, staff are currently working remotely. Callers to the Consulate General are being directed to the 24/7 emergency Line.

## Media comments by other Leaders

- President Macron strongly condemned the "inacceptable violence, destruction, intimidation and assaults against persons, property and law enforcement agents" that has taken place in New Caledonia for the past three days. Macron has sent an invitation by way of a letter, to New Caledonia's politicians, for a meeting in Paris.
- French Prime Minister Gabriel Attal, "Everything is being done to restore order and calm that Caledonians deserve," after a meeting at the presidential palace on Wednesday. He said the situation "remains very tense, with looting, riots, arson and attacks, which are unbearable and unspeakable". Speaking before the National Assembly on Tuesday, underlined the opportunity for those talks to resume and called on New Caledonia's parties to "seize the opportunity of this extended hand" to resume dialogue. "Only dialogue will allow us to appease tensions. Our hand remains extended. We need an inclusive political solution that can satisfy all stakeholders and that's why we are offering New Caledonian leaders to discuss and build together the future of New Caledonia", he told Parliament during question time.
- **On Friday CCAT (an independence political party) issued a statement calling for "a time of calm to break the spiral of violence".** The CCAT issued a new communiqué at midday on Friday. "In the face of the State's stubborn determination to impose constitutional change, we denounce the State's irresponsibility and hold it responsible for the loss of human life, the atrocities and the devastation of the country's economic fabric." The CCAT says it is deeply affected by the loss of these lives, "those of our young people murdered by militias backed by the State and non-independence leaders, and that of the young gendarme". In this press release, the cell coordinating field actions calls for appeasement. "A time for appeasement

to halt the escalation of violence." He added: "It's a break in our fight. It expresses the CCAT's determination to preserve life. We're keeping up the pressure through our presence at phase 2.5 on the ground, maintaining filtering traffic for all citizens."

- Roch Wamytan, President of the Congress of New Caledonia said "The context" is not favorable to "discussions with the President of the Republic", after the cancellation of the videoconference proposed to Caledonian elected representatives by Emmanuel Macron. "How can you discuss with the President of the Republic under these conditions?" he continued. "We accepted the principle of discussions, except that to be able to meet the President of the Republic and listen to what he had to say to us, it was normal to prepare in advance. For me, it wasn't possible to do that today."
- French Justice Minister Eric Dupond-Moretti has called on prosecutors to "take the strongest possible action against the perpetrators of the violence" and also indicated he was considering transferring the "criminals" to mainland France.
- French Home Affairs and Overseas minister Gérald Darmanin told public TV channel France 2 he had placed 10 leaders of the CCAT (an organisation linked with FLNKS) under home detention. "This is a Mafia-like body which I do not amalgamate with political pro-independence parties...[CCAT] is a group that claims itself to be pro-independence and commits looting, murders and violence," "I have numerous elements which show this is a Mafia-like, violent organisation that loots stores and shoots real bullets at (French) gendarmes, sets businesses on fire and attacks even pro-independence institutions." "Massive reinforcements were to arrive shortly and the French state would "totally regain control", he said.
- The National Council of Chiefs of the Indigenous Kanak condemned "all acts of vandalism and gun violence", but rejected the allegations that the pro-independence movement was involved in the deadly violence. Grand Chief Hippolyte Sinewami-Htamumu expressed full support for the pro-independence group, which has mobilised more than a hundred thousand people "of all ages and from all backgrounds" in peaceful protests in recent months in the capital, Nouméa, and throughout the island. "This is not a 'terrorist group' or 'mafia group', as certain political leaders want us to believe."
- Leaders of a Kanak Workers Union in Paris appealed for calm and said they were deeply saddened by deaths in their faraway homeland. "We wish to see the French government make a strong political statement rather than send troops," union leader Rock Haocas told reporters. "Starting a conversation would be a strong political statement."
- Cook Islands Prime Minister Mark Brown [and outgoing PIF Chair] said greater autonomy for the indigenous Kanak population is needed. "If there's one thing that specific countries value, it is the sovereignty and independence. To be able to have control over the destiny of your own country." "My initial view of the unrest that's occurring in Caledonia, it is cause to recognise greater autonomy and greater independence from the people on those islands. "As a member of the Forum now, we will be able to provide support assistance to these member countries as to the best way forward without trying to try to avoid any escalation of conflict."
- Henry Puna, outgoing secretary-general of the Pacific Islands Forum told journalists at his final news conference that "to see the collapse [and], protesting is very unfortunate", but it was predictable. He said the issue "has been boiling" since the 2021 independence referendum in the French territory, the third and final vote under the Nouméa Accord, which was boycotted by the pro-indigenous Kanak population. He said he was there in December 2021 to monitor the independence referendum when it was taken and "it was unfortunate that it was allowed to go ahead during that time". "We were in the middle of [the] Covid [pandemic] and the Kanak custom is that when somebody passes the mourn that for one year. So they weren't allowed that freedom. "As a result, they didn't want to take part in the referendum because they couldn't go against their tradition and go campaigning or do other work. That's disrespectful for the custom."
- Vanuatu's prime minister, Charlot Salwai (also chairman of the Melanesian Spearhead Group, which also includes Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands) said the indiscriminate destruction of property would affect New

Caledonia's economy in a big way and have a cascading effect on the lives of all New Caledonians, including Kanaks. He said France should establish dialogue with FLNKS, which has condemned the violence, and annul the constitutional reform that sparked the crisis. "These events could have been avoided if the French government had listened."

- French High Commissioner in Noumea Louis Le Franc said in a televised news conference the protesters were causing a "dire situation" for medicine and food for the population. He said main and secondary roads in Noumea were blocked by barricades with burning cars and car carcasses, some with booby traps.
- Australia's foreign affairs minister, Penny Wong, said Australians were advised to reconsider their need to travel to New Caledonia due to "civil unrest, travel disruption and limited essential services". "Again I repeat and take this opportunity to repeat Australia's call for calm. We respect and support the referendum process ... and the discussions under way between all parties, and encourage all parties to work together cooperatively to shape the future of New Caledonia."
- Labour Party Deputy Leader Carmel Sepuloni the growing unrest was a concern. At last year's Pacific Leaders Forum, French Polynesian representatives were already expressing concern about how some policies from the French government might affect its indigenous population, she said.

## Latest developments

### Key developments

#### In Noumea

- In his latest press conference [Friday 17 May] French High Commissioner stated that there are still outer suburbs of Noumea that remain largely unable to be accessed, including by police forces who are generally the target of the violence. These notably include suburbs that must be passed through in order to reach the airport.
- The High Commissioner also added that a "demining" exercise would need to be carried out before the safety of the roads could be guaranteed.
- The French Armed Forces have been tasked with securing the domestic Magenta airport, however, this has not yet been achieved. At around 5pm local time Friday, the military were attacked by rioters throwing hammers and stones. Security forces used tear gas and stun grenades in response. <sup>s6(a)</sup>
- The French High Commission has ordered that the curfew in place from 6pm to 6am will remain in force for the full duration of the state of emergency (12 days from first declaration on 15 May). The curfew has also been extended to the entire territory of New Caledonia (previous curfew was only in place for the wider Noumea area).
- Value of damages since the start of the civil unrest on Monday estimated at around XPF 24,000,000,000 (approx. NZD 357 million).
- News agencies have reported the Chambre des Metiers, an important business association, has been targeted by arson.
- There were initially concerns of looming food shortages, however the French authorities have reassured us that the situation is under control.
- The French High Commission confirmed also that 47 containers of food arrived on a ship in Noumea harbour yesterday, a further 56 containers are expected to arrive today (these contain food and medications). Distribution and transport of the items to local shops remains unclear, particularly for the worst impacted areas.
- Most stores in the area are pretty much empty and shops in some outer suburbs which have been looted and burnt.

- New Caledonia produces around 15% of its own food needs, the rest is imported. Almost none of this would be produced within the Noumea area, so there are likely to be internal distribution issues.
- **The death toll stands at 5, including 2 gendarmes.** A body was also found in Noumea harbour – the circumstances of this death are not yet clear and may be unrelated.
- In his press conference [Thursday], the French High Commissioner noted that the route to the airport remains unpassable – there are reportedly improvised explosive devices that have been placed using gas cannisters and nails. Speaking specifically about tourists, the High Commissioner said he would much prefer that tourists are stuck in their hotels, than risk their lives trying to get to the airport. [Note – this is why the airport remains closed]
- The French Armed Forces have been tasked with establishing an airbridge between Tontouta and the domestic airport Magenta (which is also closed, and is located in an area that has continued to be targeted by rioters setting the surrounding car yards on fire).
- There is concern about shortage of supplies in the hospital, including blood.
- The High Commissioner estimated that there were likely around 4,000 people actively involved in the riots in the greater Noumea area. Most of these are between 15 and 25 years old.
- Local residents in many suburbs (including those where the **MFAT seconded staff** residences are located) are organising themselves into "militias" and have set up barricades on the roads and are controlling access into and out of the street (especially in the evenings/overnight). This is making movement around the city more difficult. Many of these groups will likely have guns [note: there are 76,000 registered/declared firearms in New Caledonia, for a population of 270,000 people.]

#### *In France*

- The videoconference that Emmanuel Macron had proposed to New Caledonian elected officials will not be able to take place, as the "various actors do not wish to dialogue with each other for the moment", the Elysée Palace announced. "The situation on the ground makes it difficult to hold," the presidency also noted. As a result, the head of state will exchange "directly with the elected representatives". On Thursday evening, the Elysée Palace indicated that these discussions should take place on Friday.
- s6(a)
  - France has confirmed it will send an additional 1,000 security personnel.
- *Azerbaijan interference* s6(a)
- France has publicly announced it has detected online activity showing that the unrest in New Caledonia had been actively amplified and supported by Azerbaijan.
- s6(a)
  - s6(b)(i)
- s6(b)(i)

s6(b)(i)

- s6(a)
- Azerbaijan has rejected the claims. The Foreign Ministry spokesman has said "Instead of accusing Azerbaijan of allegedly supporting pro-independence protests in New Caledonia, the Minister of the Interior of France should focus on his country's failed policy towards the overseas territories that led to such protests."
- In 2020, the French Senate passed a resolution calling for recognition of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. This was not adopted by the French government.

#### *New Zealand's response*

- Minister of Foreign Affairs did three interviews **yesterday [Friday 17 May]** on [RNZ's Morning Report](#), [Mike Hosking's Breakfast](#), and [Newshub](#). He told Newshub MFAT officials are working on an extraction plan.
- While in Vanuatu, the Minister addressed the situation in a press conference. Video was published on [NZ Herald](#).
- Minister of Foreign Affairs issued a press release on 16 May on the situation in New Caledonia: "NZ calls for calm, constructive dialogue in New Caledonia". [Read here](#).
- Requests for media interviews have come to MFAT. MFA will take the lead on **interviews, with MFAT Media responding to requests for latest developments**.
- **The Ministry has requested a call between MFA and French Foreign Minister Sejourne, as well as the President of the Government of New Caledonia, and incoming Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General Baron Waqa and current Forum Chair Mark Brown.**
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade has stood up an Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC). The objectives of the ECC are to support the consular response; manage information flows; provide support to Post and ensure policy cohesion as the situation evolves.
- The ECC will operate from Thursday 16 May 8am-7pm daily and through the weekend. EC emails now up and running. Please direct emails to:
  - Incident controller [Noumea.Controller@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.Controller@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Response manager [Noumea.ResponseManager@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.ResponseManager@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Consular response manager [Noumea.ConsularRM@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.ConsularRM@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Intel [Noumea.Intel@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.Intel@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Ministerial liaison [Noumea.MinLiaison@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.MinLiaison@mfat.govt.nz)
- New Zealand has raised the situation in New Caledonia with the French in both WLG and PAR.

s6(a)

#### *Consular*

- MFAT has upgraded SafeTravel alert level to Level 3 (out of 4) for the whole of New Caledonia "**Avoid non-essential travel**" in New Caledonia due to ongoing civil unrest.
- Australia has also raised its own travel advisory level for Noumea.
- **231** New Zealander's are now registered on Safe Travel. As of 10am 17 May, 135



are booked to leave in the next week.

- The Consulate General in Noumea has been advised that others currently scheduled to leave later will likely want to bring forward their departure date.

- s9(2)(a)

- s9(2)(a)

- A senior Ministry official met with over 50 New Zealanders staying at the Chateau Royal, Other Kiwis travelled to the hotel for the briefing. This was well received and enabled MFAT to provide an update on how New Zealand was responding to the situation. While many of this group have flight bookings for the coming days, there were a range of questions about the Government's contingency planning should the situation worsen and flight disruption continue. **Another meeting was held on Friday 17 May.**

*The possibility of consular/assisted departure flights*

- MFAT is encouraging New Zealanders to take advantage of spare capacity on scheduled commercial flights in the coming days/early next week if they wish to depart Noumea. Australia is providing the same advice to its citizens.
- **MFA and the Defence Minister have approved preparations for an NZDF flight deployment options for managing assisted departures from Noumea. These contingent on receiving approvals from French and Noumea authorities. It is anticipated that it may be possible to operate an assisted departure from tomorrow Sunday 19 May, should approvals be received today.**

*Request/offers of assistance*

- New Zealand has not received any official requests for assistance from France, <sup>s6(a)</sup>

- s6(b)(i)

*Diplomatic outreach*

- s6(b)(i)

- New Zealand has formal consular obligations to Switzerland, Netherlands, and Samoa. <sup>s6(a)</sup>

- s6(b)(i)

- s6(b)(i)

- s6(b)(i)

- s6(b)(i)

### *Staff welfare*

- Five staff are currently at the Consulate General in Noumea working remotely. All reported safe and well. MFAT head office is in regular contact and **has prepared to deploy two additional staff to provide surge assistance** in the coming days (should air travel allow).

## Background

s6(a)

Released under the Official Information Act

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**Subject:** FORMAL MESSAGE: SITREP 9: New Caledonia Unrest - Saturday 18 May  
**Date:** Saturday, 18 May 2024 7:19:13 pm

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[RESTRICTED]

## Executive Summary SitRep 9: New Caledonia Unrest – Saturday 18 May

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### **Key media messages**

- There are currently 242 New Zealanders registered on SafeTravel as being in New Caledonia.
- New Zealand is seriously concerned about the situation and violent protests in Noumea.
- *[If raised: independence of New Caledonia]* The question of independence is one for the people of New Caledonia to decide with France. We acknowledge that the political and economic situation in New Caledonia is challenging and reiterate calls on all Parties to find a solution. We hope that peace and calm will prevail.
- s6(a) The immediate priority must be for all sides to take steps to de-escalate the situation, so that there can be dialogue and calm. No matter your views on the political arrangements in New Caledonia, everyone should agree that violence is harmful to every community there.
- *[If asked about assisted departures]* Stranded New Zealanders should rest assured that all options are being actively worked through, including assisted departures using NZDF aircraft.
- *[If asked why the Consulate in Noumea is closed]* The Consulate-General is open, and all staff are working on this response. Because of the limitations on movements, staff are currently working remotely. Callers to the Consulate General are being directed to the 24/7 emergency Line.
- *[If raised: PIF Members and Secretariat comments on crisis]* We recognise and share the concern felt among PIF Members at the recent violence. We engage in a consistent manner with all Forum Members, including New Caledonia, on PIF matters and put high value on the centrality and unity of the PIF. It is for individual countries to make their own assessments on the situation in New Caledonia. New Zealand has been very clear on the need for all sides to take steps to de-escalate, so that there can be dialogue and calm.
- s6(a)

-  
s9(2)(g)(i)

*In Noumea*

- New Zealand and Australian assisted departure flights proposed for tomorrow (Sunday 19 May) were not approved by the Noumea authorities on security grounds. We were told

that Sunday is in fact the busiest day so far in the crisis for the French resupply and military deployments with near constant flights between Magenta and Tontouta international airport.

- There were serious clashes again overnight, particularly around Magenta. The Magenta airfield fell victim to rioters, and exchanges with military personnel were heard. The French Armed Forces have been tasked with securing the domestic Magenta airport. Yesterday at 5pm local time, the military were attacked by rioters throwing hammers and stones. Security forces used tear gas and stun grenades in response. <sup>s6(a)</sup>

- Heightened tensions in Dumbéa and Païta (areas that need to be passed through to gain access to Tontouta airport). The main Tontouta airport will remain closed until at least 9am on Tuesday 21 May. The New Caledonian Government has confirmed that re-establishing commercial flights is their priority once the road has been re-opened.

- s6(a), s6(b)(i)

- The Ministry is still seeking confirmation of the availability of transport providers to support movement of people from hotels to airports. This will likely be needed either for assisted departure flights or when commercial options reopen.

- There are still outer suburbs of Noumea that remain largely unable to be accessed, including by police forces who are generally the target of the violence. These include suburbs that must be passed through in order to reach the airport. A “demining” exercise would need to be carried out before the safety of the roads could be guaranteed.

- s9(2)(a)

- The French High Commission has ordered that the 6pm to 6am curfew remain in force for the full duration of the state of emergency. This curfew covers the entire territory of New Caledonia.

- The New Caledonia government emergency food unit is working on a solution to guarantee stable food supplies. New Zealanders we met with today noted that there are supermarkets open in the Noumea area. We understand there will be a potential restock of the convenience store located within walking distance of the hotels where a large number of New Zealanders are staying.

- For medical supplies, a survey of available stocks of medicines and oxygen is currently underway. A stock of blood should arrive today by plane from France.

#### *In France*

- President Emmanuel Macron has invited Parties from New Caledonia to Paris to participate in dialogue. Some have indicated they would take up this invitation.
- The videoconference that Emmanuel Macron had proposed with various actors will not be able to take place at this time, as they “do not wish to dialogue with each other for the moment”, the Elysée Palace announced. Instead, Macron will only engage “directly with the elected representatives”.

#### *New Zealand’s response*

- Minister Peters’ comments about the possibility of an NZDF plane assisting with departures from New Caledonia are being widely reported in the [NZ Herald](#) today [Saturday 18 May], and [RNZ](#) and [Newshub](#) last night [Friday 17 May].

- The Ministry has requested calls between MFA and the French Foreign Minister, and the President of the Government of New Caledonia. MFA spoke with Pacific Islands Forum Chair Prime Minister Mark Brown at 3:30pm today. Officials are exploring calls for MFA with the Prime Ministers of Fiji and Tonga, and with the French Interior Minister.
- s6(a)

### **Consular response**

- 242 New Zealanders are currently registered with SafeTravel. New Zealanders in New Caledonia are urged to register on SafeTravel to receive direct messages from consular officials.
- Officials have spoken to management at the Sheraton Deva in Bourail (around two hours northwest of Noumea). There is no rioting in the immediate vicinity and the hotel has good food stocks. We understand that New Zealanders staying at this hotel are comfortable.
- Ministry officials and an Air NZ sales representative s9(2)(a) met with New Zealanders at the Hilton hotel at 3pm [Saturday 18 May] to discuss updates and answer questions.
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia should stay in place and avoid all protests, monitor local media for developments, and comply with any instructions and restrictions issued by local authorities.
- Welfare checks are being conducted by Post and Consular Call Centre staff to monitor particular individuals.
- New Zealand's current travel alert level for all of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential travel** (Level 3 of 4). This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.

## ANNEX: Full SitRep 9: New Caledonia Unrest – Saturday 18 May

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### **Key media messages**

#### *Political situation*

- New Zealand is seriously concerned about the situation and violent protests in Noumea.
- The immediate priority must be for all sides to take steps to de-escalate the situation and have constructive dialogue. We call for calm to enable talks to resume.
- *[If raised: independence of New Caledonia]* The question of independence is one for the people of New Caledonia to decide with France. We acknowledge that the political and economic situation in New Caledonia is challenging and reiterate calls on all Parties to find a solution. We hope that peace and calm will prevail.
- s6(a) The immediate priority must be for all sides to take steps to de-escalate the situation, so that there can be dialogue and calm. No matter your views on the political arrangements in New Caledonia, everyone should agree that violence is harmful to every community there.
- *[If asked about assisted departures]* **Stranded New Zealanders should rest assured that all options are being actively worked through, including assisted departures using NZDF**

## aircraft

- *[If raised: PIF Members and Secretariat comments on crisis]* The Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) is the region's pre-eminent political entity and it is understandable that Forum Members and the PIF Secretariat are following developments in New Caledonia closely. We recognise and share the concern felt among Forum Members at the recent violence. We engage in a consistent manner with all Forum Members, including New Caledonia, on PIF matters and put high value on the centrality and unity of the PIF. It is for individual countries to make their own assessments on the situation in New Caledonia. New Zealand has been very clear on the need for all sides to take steps to de-escalate, so that there can be dialogue and calm.
- s6(a)

## Consular response

- There are currently 242 New Zealanders registered on SafeTravel as being in New Caledonia. New Zealanders in New Caledonia are urged to register on SafeTravel to receive direct messages from consular officials.
- New Zealanders in need of immediate consular assistance should contact the 24/7 Consular Emergency line on +64 99 20 20 20.
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia should stay in place and avoid all protests, monitor local media for developments, and comply with any instructions and restrictions issued by local authorities.
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade has activated its emergency crisis system to respond to the situation in New Caledonia. Consular officials are in regular contact with impacted New Zealanders, New Caledonia authorities, and our international partners.
- In-person meetings were held for several groups of New Zealanders in Noumea Thursday 16 May and yesterday [Friday 17 May]. Consular officials are also proactively attempting to contact registered New Zealanders in New Caledonia to check on their situations, and any specific health or welfare concerns. Welfare checks are being conducted to support particular individuals.
- Officials are regularly speaking with New Caledonian authorities regarding airport operations and access, and ongoing needs in relation to critical supplies such as food and medicine.
- At present, with the Tontouta international airport remaining closed, there is no safe way to leave New Caledonia.
- New Zealand's current travel alert level for all of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential travel** (Level 3 of 4). This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.
- We recommend that all travellers check with their airline for any updates on flight bookings. Travellers should also contact their travel insurance provider if travel has been disrupted.
- *[If asked about assisted departures]* Stranded New Zealanders should rest assured that all options are on the table, including assisted departures using an NZDF aircraft.
- *[If asked why the Consulate in Noumea is closed]* The Consulate-General is open, and all staff are working on this response. Because of the limitations on movements, staff are currently working remotely. Callers to the Consulate General are being directed to the 24/7 emergency Line.

## Latest developments

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### **Key developments**

#### *In Noumea*

- New Zealand <sup>s6(a)</sup> assisted departure flights proposed for tomorrow (Sunday 19 May) were not approved by the Noumea authorities on security grounds. We were told that Sunday is in fact the busiest day so far in the crisis for the French resupply and military deployments with near constant flights between Magenta and Tontouta international airport.
- There were serious clashes again overnight, particularly around Magenta. The Magenta airfield fell victim to rioters, and exchanges with military personnel were heard. The French Armed Forces have been tasked with securing the domestic Magenta airport and with establishing an airbridge between Tontouta and the domestic airport Magenta.
- Yesterday at 5pm local time, the military were attacked by rioters throwing hammers and stones. Security forces used tear gas and stun grenades in response. <sup>s6(a)</sup>
- Heightened tensions in Dumbéa and Païta (areas that need to be passed through to gain access to Tontouta airport). The main Tontouta airport will remain closed until at least 9am on Tuesday 21 May. The New Caledonian Government has confirmed that re-establishing commercial flights is their priority once the road has been re-opened.
- The route to the airport remains unpassable – there are reportedly improvised explosive devices that have been placed using gas cannisters and nails. [Note – this is why the airport remains closed]
- The Ministry is still seeking confirmation of the availability of transport providers to support movement of people from hotels to airports. This will likely be needed either for assisted departure flights or when commercial options reopen.
- There are still outer suburbs of Noumea that remain largely inaccessible, including by police forces who are generally the target of the violence. These notably include suburbs that must be passed through in order to reach the airport. A “demining” exercise would need to be carried out before the safety of the roads could be guaranteed.
- <sup>s9(2)(a)</sup>
- The French High Commission has ordered that the 6pm to 6am curfew remain in force for the full duration of the state of emergency (12 days from first declaration on 15 May). The curfew has been extended to cover the entire territory of New Caledonia (it previously only applied to the wider Noumea area).
- The death toll stands at 5, including 2 gendarmes and 3 Kanak. A body was also found in Noumea harbour – the circumstances of this death are not yet clear and may be unrelated.
- Local residents in many suburbs (including those where MFAT seconded staff residences are located) are organising themselves into “militias” and have set up barricades on the roads and are controlling access into and out of the street (especially in the evenings/overnight). Many of these groups likely have guns [note: there are 76,000 registered/declared firearms in New Caledonia, for a population of 270,000 people.]

- New Caledonia Prime Minister Gabriel Attal has indicated that 17 house arrests of riot leaders have been requested. The judicial authorities are also hard at work. The public prosecutor reported that there were 4 criminal proceedings, 163 people in police custody, 26 people deferred to court, but also that an investigation had been opened "into acts of criminal conspiracy, theft, damage by fire in an organized gang, grouping with a view to committing violence or damage".
- Most food stores in the area are pretty much empty and shops in some outer suburbs which have been looted and burnt.
- The New Caledonia government emergency food unit is working on a solution to guarantee stable food supplies. New Zealanders we met with today noted that there are supermarkets open in the Noumea area. We understand there will be a potential restock of the convenience store located within walking distance of the hotels where a large number of New Zealanders are staying.
- The French High Commission confirmed also that 47 containers of food arrived on a ship in Noumea harbour yesterday, a further 56 containers are expected to arrive today (these contain food and medications). Distribution and transport of the items to local shops remains unclear, particularly for the worst impacted areas.
- New Caledonia produces around 15% of its own food needs, the rest is imported. Almost none of this would be produced within the Noumea area, so there are likely to be internal distribution issues.
- There is concern about shortage of supplies in the hospital, including blood. A survey of available stocks of medicines and oxygen is currently underway. A stock of blood should arrive today by plane from France.
- The High Commissioner estimated that there were likely around 4,000 people actively involved in the riots in the greater Noumea area, most between 15 and 25 years old.
- Value of damages since the start of the civil unrest on Monday estimated at around XPF 24,000,000,000 (approx. NZD 357 million). According to economic players, between 150 and 180 businesses have been destroyed and 2,000 people have potentially lost their jobs.

#### *In France*

- President Emmanuel Macron has invited Parties from New Caledonia to Paris to participate in dialogue. Some have indicated they would take up this invitation.
- The videoconference that Emmanuel Macron had proposed with various actors will not be able to take place at this time, as they "do not wish to dialogue with each other for the moment", the Elysée Palace announced. Instead, Macron will only engage "directly with the elected representatives". On Thursday evening, the Elysée Palace indicated that these discussions should take place on Friday.
- Our Embassy in Paris has received a message from the inter-ministerial crisis unit chaired s6(a)

#### *Azerbaijan interference* s6(a)

- France has publicly announced it has detected online activity showing that the unrest in New Caledonia had been actively amplified and supported by Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan has rejected the claims.



- s6(a)  
s6(b)(i)
- s6(a)
- s6(a)

#### *New Zealand's response*

- ← Minister Peters' comments about the possibility of an NZDF plane assisting with departures from New Caledonia are being widely reported in the [NZ Herald](#) today [Saturday 18 May], and [RNZ](#) and [Newshub](#) last night [Friday 17 May].
- While in Vanuatu, the Minister addressed the situation in a press conference. [View here](#).
- The Minister of Foreign Affairs issued a press release on 16 May on the situation in New Caledonia: "NZ calls for calm, constructive dialogue in New Caledonia". [Read here](#).
- Requests for media interviews have come to MFAT. The Minister of Foreign Affairs will lead on interviews, with MFAT Media responding to requests for latest developments.
- The Ministry has requested calls between MFA and the French Foreign Minister, and the President of the Government of New Caledonia. MFA spoke with Pacific Islands Forum Chair Prime Minister Mark Brown at 3:30pm today. Officials are exploring calls for MFA with the Prime Ministers of Fiji and Tonga, and with the French Interior Minister.
- The Ministry has stood up an Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC). The objectives of the ECC are to support the consular response; manage information flows; provide support to Post and ensure policy cohesion as the situation evolves.
- The ECC will operate from Thursday 16 May 8am-7pm daily and through the weekend. EC emails now up and running. Please direct emails to:
  - Incident controller [Noumea.Controller@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.Controller@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Response manager [Noumea.ResponseManager@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.ResponseManager@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Consular response manager [Noumea.ConsularRM@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.ConsularRM@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Intel [Noumea.Intel@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.Intel@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Ministerial liaison [Noumea.MinLiaison@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.MinLiaison@mfat.govt.nz)
- New Zealand has raised the situation in New Caledonia with the French in both WLG and PAR.

#### *Consular*

- 242 New Zealanders are currently registered with SafeTravel. New Zealanders in New Caledonia are urged to register on SafeTravel to receive direct messages from consular officials.
- Officials have spoken to management at the Sheraton Deva in Bourail (around two hours northwest of Noumea). There is no rioting in the immediate vicinity and the hotel has good food stocks. We understand that New Zealanders staying at this hotel are comfortable.

- Ministry officials and an Air NZ sales representative (who is staying at the Chateau Royal) met with New Zealanders at the Hilton hotel at 3pm [Saturday 19 May] to discuss updates and answer questions.
- MFAT has upgraded SafeTravel alert level to Level 3 (out of 4) for the whole of New Caledonia **“Avoid non-essential travel”** in New Caledonia due to ongoing civil unrest.
- Australia has also raised its own travel advisory level for Noumea.
- The Consulate General in Noumea has been advised that others currently scheduled to leave later will likely want to bring forward their departure date.
- s9(2)(a)
- s9(2)(a)
- A senior Ministry official met with over 50 New Zealanders staying at the Chateau Royal; other Kiwis travelled to the hotel for the briefing. This was well received and enabled MFAT to provide an update on how New Zealand was responding to the situation. While many of this group had flight bookings for the coming days, there were a range of questions about the Government’s contingency planning should the situation worsen, and flight disruption continue. Another meeting was held on Friday 17 May.

*Request/offers of assistance*

- s6(a)
- s6(b)(i)

*Diplomatic outreach*

- New Zealand has formal consular obligations to Switzerland, Netherlands, and Samoa.  
s6(a)
- s6(b)(i)
- s6(b)(i)

*Staff welfare*

- Five staff are currently at the Consulate General in Noumea working remotely. All reported safe and well. MFAT head office is in regular contact and has prepared to deploy two additional staff to provide surge assistance in the coming days (should air travel allow).

## Media comments by other Leaders

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- President Macron strongly condemned the "inacceptable violence, destruction, intimidation and assaults against persons, property and law enforcement agents" that has taken place in New Caledonia for the past three days. Macron has sent an invitation by way of a letter, to New Caledonia's politicians, for a meeting in Paris.
- French Prime Minister Gabriel Attal, "Everything is being done to restore order and calm that Caledonians deserve," after a meeting at the presidential palace on Wednesday. He said the situation "remains very tense, with looting, riots, arson and attacks, which are unbearable and unspeakable". Speaking before the National Assembly on Tuesday, underlined the opportunity for those talks to resume and called on New Caledonia's parties to "seize the opportunity of this extended hand" to resume dialogue. "Only dialogue will allow us to appease tensions. Our hand remains extended. We need an inclusive political solution that can satisfy all stakeholders and that's why we are offering New Caledonian leaders to discuss and build together the future of New Caledonia", he told Parliament during question time.
- On Friday CCAT (an independence political party) issued a statement calling for "a time of calm to break the spiral of violence". The CCAT issued a new communiqué at midday on Friday. "In the face of the State's stubborn determination to impose constitutional change, we denounce the State's irresponsibility and hold it responsible for the loss of human life, the atrocities and the devastation of the country's economic fabric." The CCAT says it is deeply affected by the loss of these lives, "those of our young people murdered by militias backed by the State and non-independence leaders, and that of the young gendarme". In this press release, the cell coordinating field actions calls for appeasement. "A time for appeasement to halt the escalation of violence." He added: "It's a break in our fight. It expresses the CCAT's determination to preserve life. We're keeping up the pressure through our presence at phase 2.5 on the ground, maintaining filtering traffic for all citizens."
- Roch Wamytan, President of the Congress of New Caledonia said "The context" is not favorable to "discussions with the President of the Republic", after the cancellation of the videoconference proposed to Caledonian elected representatives by Emmanuel Macron. "How can you discuss with the President of the Republic under these conditions?" he continued. "We accepted the principle of discussions, except that to be able to meet the President of the Republic and listen to what he had to say to us, it was normal to prepare in advance. For me, it wasn't possible to do that today."
- French Justice Minister Eric Dupond-Moretti has called on prosecutors to "take the strongest possible action against the perpetrators of the violence" and also indicated he was considering transferring the "criminals" to mainland France.
- French Home Affairs and Overseas minister Gérald Darmanin told public TV channel France 2 he had placed 10 leaders of the CCAT (an organisation linked with FLNKS) under home detention. "This is a Mafia-like body which I do not amalgamate with political pro-independence parties...[CCAT] is a group that claims itself to be pro-independence and commits looting, murders and violence," "I have numerous elements which show this is a Mafia-like, violent organisation that loots stores and shoots real bullets at (French) gendarmes, sets businesses on fire and attacks even pro-independence institutions." "Massive reinforcements were to arrive shortly and the French state would "totally regain control", he said.
- The National Council of Chiefs of the Indigenous Kanak condemned "all acts of vandalism and gun violence", but rejected the allegations that the pro-independence movement was involved in the deadly violence. Grand Chief Hippolyte Sinewami-Htamumu expressed full support for the pro-independence group, which has mobilised more than a hundred

thousand people "of all ages and from all backgrounds" in peaceful protests in recent months in the capital, Nouméa, and throughout the island. "This is not a 'terrorist group' or 'mafia group', as certain political leaders want us to believe."

- Romuald Pidjo, from the CCAT's [a pro-independence political group] Kanak delegation in Paris, on the anger of young people in Nouméa's working-class neighbourhoods [where some of the worst violence has taken place]. "These are people who are very disadvantaged, people who have been left behind. And what do they see, all these people, every day? They see people who've come from mainland France, who have big cars. And they have nothing! The straw that broke the camel's back was this constitutional bill in which the state is going to say: 'We're going to continue to bring in people who are going to crush you, who are going to take everything in this country'."
- Leaders of a Kanak Workers Union in Paris appealed for calm and said they were deeply saddened by deaths in their faraway homeland. "We wish to see the French government make a strong political statement rather than send troops," union leader Rock Haocas told reporters. "Starting a conversation would be a strong political statement."
- Cook Islands Prime Minister Mark Brown [and outgoing PIF Chair] said greater autonomy for the indigenous Kanak population is needed. "If there's one thing that specific countries value, it is the sovereignty and independence. To be able to have control over the destiny of your own country." "My initial view of the unrest that's occurring in Caledonia, it is cause to recognise greater autonomy and greater independence from the people on those islands. "As a member of the Forum now, we will be able to provide support assistance to these member countries as to the best way forward without trying to try to avoid any escalation of conflict."
- Henry Puna, outgoing secretary-general of the Pacific Islands Forum told journalists at his final news conference that "to see the collapse [and], protesting is very unfortunate", but it was predictable. He said the issue "has been boiling" since the 2021 independence referendum in the French territory, the third and final vote under the Nouméa Accord, which was boycotted by the pro-indigenous Kanak population. He said he was there in December 2021 to monitor the independence referendum when it was taken and "it was unfortunate that it was allowed to go ahead during that time". "We were in the middle of [the] Covid [pandemic] and the Kanak custom is that when somebody passes the mourn that for one year. So they weren't allowed that freedom. "As a result, they didn't want to take part in the referendum because they couldn't go against their tradition and go campaigning or do other work. That's disrespectful for the custom."
- Vanuatu's prime minister, Charlot Salwai (also chairman of the Melanesian Spearhead Group, which also includes Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands) said the indiscriminate destruction of property would affect New Caledonia's economy in a big way and have a cascading effect on the lives of all New Caledonians, including Kanaks. He said France should establish dialogue with FLNKS, which has condemned the violence, and annul the constitutional reform that sparked the crisis. "These events could have been avoided if the French government had listened."
- French High Commissioner in Noumea Louis Le Franc said in a televised news conference the protesters were causing a "dire situation" for medicine and food for the population. He said main and secondary roads in Noumea were blocked by barricades with burning cars and car carcasses, some with booby traps.
- Australia's foreign affairs minister, Penny Wong, said Australians were advised to reconsider their need to travel to New Caledonia due to "civil unrest, travel disruption and limited essential services". "Again I repeat and take this opportunity to repeat Australia's call for calm. We respect and support the referendum process ... and the discussions under way between all parties, and encourage all parties to work together cooperatively to shape the future of New Caledonia."

- Labour Party Deputy Leader Carmel Sepuloni said the growing unrest was a concern. At last year's Pacific Islands Forum, French Polynesian representatives were already expressing concern about how some policies from the French government might affect its indigenous population, she said.

## Background

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s6(a)

Released under the Official Information Act

**From:** [Noumea.Intel](#)  
**To:** [NOUMEA](#); [PACPF](#); [DCE](#); [...PACIFIC POSTS](#); [DS AAG](#); [DS EMA](#); [DS MLG](#); [AUS](#); [EUR](#); [ISED](#); [SORD Security](#); [CON](#); [PARIS](#); [FM.P/S MFA \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.P/S Associate MFA \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.Defence \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.DPMC \(FPA\) \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.Police \(Seemail\)](#); [s6\(a\)](#) [FM.Police \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.Customs Service \(Seemail\)](#); [PACMM](#); [PACREG](#); [PHM](#); [DEVPR](#); [DEVPCO](#); [...EUROPEAN POSTS](#)  
**Cc:** [Noumea.ResponseManager](#); [Noumea.Controller](#); [Noumea.MinLiaison](#); [Noumea.ConsularRM](#); [Noumea.AssistedDepartures](#); [Noumea.Logistics](#); [Noumea.Planning](#); [Noumea.Intel](#); [SCMU@dpmc.govt.nz](#); [fiona.dally@mbie.govt.nz](#); [chris.shaw@mbie.govt.nz](#); [mike.hill@caa.govt.nz](#); [Ben.king@dpmc.govt.nz](#); [...YEOMANS, Sally \(Inet\)](#); [Vanessa.berry@customs.govt.nz](#); [sean.bolton@dpmc.govt.nz](#); [Cherie.blithe@dpmc.govt.nz](#); [c.vandermeulen@transport.govt.nz](#); [KANE, Jared \(PEP\)](#); [Sally.Giles@health.govt.nz](#); [Michael.inglis@mpi.govt.nz](#); [sarah.tuihalanginie@mpi.govt.nz](#); [zubair.ali@mpi.govt.nz](#); [Miguel.Navarro@mpi.govt.nz](#)  
**Subject:** FORMAL MESSAGE: SITREP 10: New Caledonia Unrest - Sunday 19 May  
**Date:** Sunday, 19 May 2024 11:10:17 am

[RESTRICTED]

## Executive Summary SitRep 10: New Caledonia Unrest – Sunday 19 May

### Key media messages

- New Zealand is seriously concerned about the situation and violent protests in Noumea.
- The safety of New Zealanders in New Caledonia is an urgent priority for us.
- We are aware of around 250 New Zealanders in New Caledonia.
- New Zealanders are urged to keep their SafeTravel Registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their 'departure date' is updated.
- New Zealand authorities have now completed preparations for NZDF flights to bring New Zealanders in New Caledonia home while commercial flights are not operating. We await approval from French authorities as to when these flights are safe to proceed.
- *[If raised: independence of New Caledonia]* The question of independence is one for the people of New Caledonia to decide with France. We acknowledge that the political and economic situation in New Caledonia is challenging and reiterate calls on all Parties to find a solution. We hope that peace and calm will prevail.
- **s6(a)** The immediate priority must be for all sides to take steps to de-escalate the situation, so that there can be dialogue and calm. No matter your views on the political arrangements in New Caledonia, everyone should agree that violence is harmful to every community there.
- *[If asked why the Consulate in Noumea is closed]* The Consulate-General is open, and all staff are working on this response. Because of the limitations on movements, staff are currently working remotely. Callers to the Consulate General are being directed to the 24/7 emergency Line.
- *[If raised: PIF Members and Secretariat comments on crisis]* We recognise and share the concern felt among PIF Members at the recent violence. We engage in a consistent manner with all Forum Members, including New Caledonia, on PIF matters and put high value on the centrality and unity of the PIF. It is for individual countries to make their own assessments on the situation in New Caledonia. New Zealand has been very clear on the need for all sides to take steps to de-escalate, so that there can be dialogue and calm.
- **s6(a)**

s9(2)(g)(i)

In Noumea

- New Zealand s6(b)(i) assisted departure flights proposed for today (Sunday 19 May) were not approved by the Noumea authorities on security grounds. We were told that Sunday is in fact the busiest day so far in the crisis for the French resupply and military deployments with near constant flights between Magenta and Tontouta international airport.
- Another person has been killed and two more injured in an exchange of gunfire on Saturday 18 May as they tried to pass a barricade near Kaala-Gomen. This brings the death toll to six, including two gendarmes and three Kanak.
- The Magenta airfield fell victim to rioters Friday night 17 May, and exchanges with military personnel were heard. The military were attacked by rioters throwing hammers and stones. Security forces used tear gas and stun grenades in response. The French Armed Forces have been tasked with securing the domestic Magenta airport. s6(a)
- Heightened tensions in Dumbéa and Païta (areas that need to be passed through to gain access to Tontouta airport). The main Tontouta airport will remain closed until at least 9am on Tuesday 21 May. The New Caledonian Government has confirmed that re-establishing commercial flights is their priority once the road has been re-opened.
- s6(b)(i)
- The Ministry is still seeking confirmation of the availability of transport providers to support movement of people from hotels to airports. This will likely be needed either for assisted departure flights or when commercial options reopen.
- There are still outer suburbs of Noumea that remain largely unable to be accessed, including by police forces who are generally the target of the violence. These include suburbs that must be passed through in order to reach the airport. A “demining” exercise would need to be carried out before the safety of the roads could be guaranteed.
- s9(2)(a)
- The French High Commission has ordered that the 6pm to 6am curfew remain in force for the full duration of the state of emergency. This curfew covers the entire territory of New Caledonia.
- French officials confirmed last night (Saturday 18 May Paris time) that New Caledonia has sufficient provisions of food and medicine, including additional supplies that have arrived in the port.
- French reinforcements were focused on restoring freedom of movement by systematically removing barrages and hazards; restocking supermarkets and pharmacies, and ensuring the efficient movement of supplies around New Caledonia; and supporting the function of health services, ensuring access was available to those in need.
- New Zealanders we met with on Saturday 18 May noted that there are supermarkets open in the Noumea area. We understand there will be a potential restock of the convenience store located within walking distance of the hotels where a large number of New Zealanders are staying.

#### *In France*

- President Emmanuel Macron has invited Parties from New Caledonia to Paris to

participate in dialogue. Some have indicated they would take up this invitation.

- The videoconference that Emmanuel Macron had proposed with various actors will not be able to take place at this time, as they "do not wish to dialogue with each other for the moment", the Elysée Palace announced. Instead, Macron will only engage "directly with the elected representatives".

#### *New Zealand's response*

- Minister Peters' comments about the possibility of an NZDF plane assisting with departures from New Caledonia are being widely reported in the [NZ Herald](#) Saturday 18 May, and [RNZ](#) and [Newshub](#) Friday 17 May.
- The Ministry has requested calls between MFA and the French Foreign Minister, and the President of the Government of New Caledonia. MFA spoke with Pacific Islands Forum Chair Prime Minister Mark Brown at 3:30pm Saturday 18 May. The discussion included New Zealand's desire to work with Pacific partners to help calm the situation down, and the role of PIF as a regional institution to facilitate dialogue and promote de-escalation in the region. Officials are also exploring calls for MFA with the Prime Ministers of Fiji and Tonga, and with the French Interior Minister.
- s6(a), s6(b)(i)

#### **Consular response**

- We are aware of around 250 New Zealanders in New Caledonia. New Zealanders in New Caledonia are urged to register on SafeTravel and keep their registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their 'departure date' is updated.
- Officials have spoken to management at the Sheraton Deva in Bourail (around two hours northwest of Noumea). There is no rioting in the immediate vicinity and the hotel has good food stocks. We understand that New Zealanders staying at this hotel are comfortable.
- Ministry officials and an Air NZ sales representative (who is staying at the Chateau Royal) met with New Zealanders at the Hilton hotel on Saturday 18 May to discuss updates and answer questions.
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia should stay in place and avoid all protests, monitor local media for developments, and comply with any instructions and restrictions issued by local authorities.
- Welfare checks are being conducted by Post and Consular Call Centre staff to monitor particular individuals.
- New Zealand's current travel alert level for all of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential travel** (Level 3 of 4). This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.

#### **ANNEX: Full SitRep 10: New Caledonia Unrest – Sunday 19 May**

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#### **Key media messages**

##### *Political situation*

- New Zealand is seriously concerned about the situation and violent protests in Noumea.
- The immediate priority must be for all sides to take steps to de-escalate the situation and have constructive dialogue. We call for calm to enable talks to resume.



- *[If raised: independence of New Caledonia]* The question of independence is one for the people of New Caledonia to decide with France. We acknowledge that the political and economic situation in New Caledonia is challenging and reiterate calls on all Parties to find a solution. We hope that peace and calm will prevail.
- s6(a) The immediate priority must be for all sides to take steps to de-escalate the situation, so that there can be dialogue and calm. No matter your views on the political arrangements in New Caledonia, everyone should agree that violence is harmful to every community there.
- *[If asked about assisted departures]* **New Zealand authorities have now completed preparations for NZDF flights to bring New Zealanders in New Caledonia home while commercial flights are not operating. We await approval from French authorities as to when these flights are safe to proceed.**
- *[If raised: PIF Members and Secretariat comments on crisis]* The Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) is the region's pre-eminent political entity and it is understandable that Forum Members and the PIF Secretariat are following developments in New Caledonia closely. We recognise and share the concern felt among Forum Members at the recent violence. We engage in a consistent manner with all Forum Members, including New Caledonia, on PIF matters and put high value on the centrality and unity of the PIF. It is for individual countries to make their own assessments on the situation in New Caledonia. New Zealand has been very clear on the need for all sides to take steps to de-escalate, so that there can be dialogue and calm.
- s6(a)

#### Consular response

- **We are aware of around 250 New Zealanders in New Caledonia.**
- **New Zealanders are urged to keep their SafeTravel Registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their 'departure date' is updated.**
- New Zealanders in need of immediate consular assistance should contact the 24/7 Consular Emergency line on +64 99 20 20 20.
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia should stay in place and avoid all protests, monitor local media for developments, and comply with any instructions and restrictions issued by local authorities.
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade has activated its emergency crisis system to respond to the situation in New Caledonia. Consular officials are in regular contact with impacted New Zealanders, New Caledonia authorities, and our international partners. In-person meetings were held for several groups of New Zealanders in Noumea Thursday 16 May and Friday 17 May. Consular officials are also proactively attempting to contact registered New Zealanders in New Caledonia to check on their situations, and any specific health or welfare concerns. Welfare checks are being conducted to support particular individuals.
- Officials are regularly speaking with New Caledonian authorities regarding airport operations and access, and ongoing needs in relation to critical supplies such as food and medicine.
- At present, with the Tontouta international airport remaining closed, there is no safe way to leave New Caledonia.
- New Zealand's current travel alert level for all of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential**

**travel** (Level 3 of 4). This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.

- We recommend that all travellers check with their airline for any updates on flight bookings. Travellers should also contact their travel insurance provider if travel has been disrupted.
- *[If asked about assisted departures]* New Zealand authorities have now completed preparations for NZDF flights to bring New Zealanders in New Caledonia home while commercial flights are not operating. We await approval from French authorities as to when these flights are safe to proceed.
- *[If asked why the Consulate in Noumea is closed]* The Consulate-General is open, and all staff are working on this response. Because of the limitations on movements, staff are currently working remotely. Callers to the Consulate General are being directed to the 24/7 emergency Line.

## Latest developments

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### **Key developments**

#### *In Noumea*

- New Zealand<sup>s6(a)</sup> assisted departure flights proposed for today (Sunday 19 May) were not approved by the Noumea authorities on security grounds. We were told that Sunday is in fact the busiest day so far in the crisis for the French resupply and military deployments with near constant flights between Magenta and Tontouta international airport.
- One person has been killed and two more injured in an exchange of gunfire on Saturday 18 May as they tried to pass a barricade near Kaala-Gomen. This brings the death toll to six, including 2 gendarmes and 3 Kanak. A body was also found in Noumea harbour – the circumstances of this death are not yet clear and may be unrelated.
- The Magenta airfield fell victim to rioters Friday night 17 May, and exchanges with military personnel were heard. The French Armed Forces have been tasked with securing the domestic Magenta airport. The military were attacked by rioters throwing hammers and stones. Security forces used tear gas and stun grenades in response.<sup>s6(a)</sup>
- Heightened tensions in Dumbéa and Païta (areas that need to be passed through to gain access to Tontouta airport). The main Tontouta airport will remain closed until at least 9am on Tuesday 21 May. The New Caledonian Government has confirmed that re-establishing commercial flights is their priority once the road has been re-opened.
- The route to the airport remains unpassable – there are reportedly improvised explosive devices that have been placed using gas cannisters and nails. [Note – this is why the airport remains closed]
- The Ministry is still seeking confirmation of the availability of transport providers to support movement of people from hotels to airports. This will likely be needed either for assisted departure flights or when commercial options reopen.
- There are still outer suburbs of Noumea that remain largely inaccessible, including by police forces who are generally the target of the violence. These notably include suburbs that must be passed through in order to reach the airport. A “demining” exercise would need to be carried out before the safety of the roads could be guaranteed.

- s9(2)(a)
- The French High Commission has ordered that the 6pm to 6am curfew remain in force for the full duration of the state of emergency (12 days from first declaration on 15 May). The curfew has been extended to cover the entire territory of New Caledonia (it previously only applied to the wider Noumea area).
- Local residents in many suburbs (including those where MFAT seconded staff residences are located) are organising themselves into “militias” and have set up barricades on the roads and are controlling access into and out of the street (especially in the evenings/overnight). Many of these groups likely have guns [note: there are 76,000 registered/declared firearms in New Caledonia, for a population of 270,000 people.]
- New Caledonia Prime Minister Gabriel Attal has indicated that 17 house arrests of riot leaders have been requested. The judicial authorities are also hard at work. The public prosecutor reported that there were 4 criminal proceedings, 163 people in police custody, 26 people deferred to court, but also that an investigation had been opened “into acts of criminal conspiracy, theft, damage by fire in an organized gang, grouping with a view to committing violence or damage”.
- Most food stores in the area are pretty much empty and shops in some outer suburbs which have been looted and burnt.
- French officials confirmed last night (Saturday 18 May Paris time) that New Caledonia has sufficient provisions of food and medicine, including additional supplies that have arrived in the port.
- French reinforcements were focused on restoring freedom of movement by systematically removing barrages and hazards; restocking supermarkets and pharmacies, and ensuring the efficient movement of supplies around New Caledonia; and supporting the function of health services, ensuring access was available to those in need.
- New Zealanders we met with today noted that there are supermarkets open in the Noumea area. We understand there will be a potential restock of the convenience store located within walking distance of the hotels where a large number of New Zealanders are staying.
- New Caledonia produces around 15% of its own food needs, the rest is imported. Almost none of this would be produced within the Noumea area, so there are likely to be internal distribution issues.
- There is concern about shortage of supplies in the hospital, including blood. A survey of available stocks of medicines and oxygen is currently underway. A stock of blood was due to arrive Saturday 18 May by plane from France.
- The High Commissioner estimated that there were likely around 4,000 people actively involved in the riots in the greater Noumea area, most between 15 and 25 years old.
- Value of damages since the start of the civil unrest on Monday estimated at around XPF 24,000,000,000 (approx. NZD 357 million). According to economic players, between 150 and 180 businesses have been destroyed and 2,000 people have potentially lost their jobs.

#### *In France*

- President Emmanuel Macron has invited Parties from New Caledonia to Paris to participate in dialogue. Some have indicated they would take up this invitation.

- s6(b)(i)

- s6(b)(i)

#### *Azerbaijan interference* s6(a)

- France has publicly announced it has detected online activity showing that the unrest in New Caledonia had been actively amplified and supported by Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan has rejected the claims.

- s6(a)
  - s6(b)(i)

- s6(b)(i)

- s6(a)

#### *New Zealand's response*

← Minister Peters' comments about the possibility of an NZDF plane assisting with departures from New Caledonia are being widely reported in the [NZ Herald](#) [Saturday 18 May], and [RNZ](#) and [Newshub](#) [Friday 17 May].

- While in Vanuatu, the Minister addressed the situation in a press conference. [View here](#).

- The Minister of Foreign Affairs issued a press release on 16 May on the situation in New Caledonia: "NZ calls for calm, constructive dialogue in New Caledonia". [Read here](#).

- Requests for media interviews have come to MFAT. The Minister of Foreign Affairs will lead on interviews, with MFAT Media responding to requests for latest developments.

- The Ministry has requested calls between MFA and the French Foreign Minister, and the President of the Government of New Caledonia. MFA spoke with Pacific Islands Forum Chair Prime Minister Mark Brown at 3:30pm **Saturday 18 May**. **The discussion included New Zealand's desire to work with Pacific partners to help calm the situation down, and the role of PIF as a regional institution to facilitate dialogue and promote de-escalation in the region.** Officials are **also** exploring calls for MFA with the Prime Ministers of Fiji and Tonga, and with the French Interior Minister.

- The Ministry has stood up an Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC). The objectives of the ECC are to support the consular response; manage information flows; provide support to Post and ensure policy cohesion as the situation evolves.

- The ECC will operate from Thursday 16 May 8am-7pm daily and through the weekend. EC

emails now up and running. Please direct emails to:

- Incident controller [Noumea.Controller@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.Controller@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Response manager [Noumea.ResponseManager@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.ResponseManager@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Consular response manager [Noumea.ConsularRM@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.ConsularRM@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Intel [Noumea.Intel@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.Intel@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Ministerial liaison [Noumea.MinLiaison@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.MinLiaison@mfat.govt.nz)
- New Zealand has raised the situation in New Caledonia with the French in both WLG and PAR.

#### *Consular*

- We are aware of around 250 New Zealanders in New Caledonia. New Zealanders are urged to keep their SafeTravel Registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their 'departure date' is updated.
- Officials have spoken to management at the Sheraton Deva in Bourail (around two hours northwest of Noumea). There is no rioting in the immediate vicinity and the hotel has good food stocks. We understand that New Zealanders staying at this hotel are comfortable.
- Ministry officials and an Air NZ sales representative (who is staying at the Chateau Royal) met with New Zealanders at the Hilton hotel on Saturday 19 May to discuss updates and answer questions.
- MFAT has upgraded SafeTravel alert level to Level 3 (out of 4) for the whole of New Caledonia **"Avoid non-essential travel"** in New Caledonia due to ongoing civil unrest.
- Australia has also raised its own travel advisory level for Noumea.
- The Consulate General in Noumea has been advised that others currently scheduled to leave later will likely want to bring forward their departure date.
- s9(2)(a)
- s9(2)(a)
- A senior Ministry official has met with over 50 New Zealanders staying at the Chateau Royal; other Kiwis travelled to the hotel for the briefing. This was well received and enabled MFAT to provide an update on how New Zealand was responding to the situation. While many of this group had flight bookings for the coming days, there were a range of questions about the Government's contingency planning should the situation worsen, and flight disruption continue. Another meeting was held on Friday 17 May.

#### *Request/offers of assistance*

- New Zealand has not received any official requests for assistance from France, s6(b)(i)
- s6(a)

#### *Diplomatic outreach*

- New Zealand has formal consular obligations to Switzerland, Netherlands, and Samoa.

s6(a)

- s6(b)(i)

- s6(b)(i)

#### *Staff welfare*

- Five staff are currently at the Consulate General in Noumea working remotely. All reported safe and well. MFAT head office is in regular contact and has prepared to deploy two additional staff to provide surge assistance in the coming days (should air travel allow).

#### Media comments by other Leaders

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- President Macron strongly condemned the "inacceptable violence, destruction, intimidation and assaults against persons, property and law enforcement agents" that has taken place in New Caledonia for the past three days. Macron has sent an invitation by way of a letter, to New Caledonia's politicians, for a meeting in Paris.
- French Prime Minister Gabriel Attal, "Everything is being done to restore order and calm that Caledonians deserve," after a meeting at the presidential palace on Wednesday. He said the situation "remains very tense, with looting, riots, arson and attacks, which are unbearable and unspeakable". Speaking before the National Assembly on Tuesday, underlined the opportunity for those talks to resume and called on New Caledonia's parties to "seize the opportunity of this extended hand" to resume dialogue. "Only dialogue will allow us to appease tensions. Our hand remains extended. We need an inclusive political solution that can satisfy all stakeholders and that's why we are offering New Caledonian leaders to discuss and build together the future of New Caledonia", he told Parliament during question time.
- On Friday CCAT (an independence political party) issued a statement calling for "a time of calm to break the spiral of violence". The CCAT issued a new communiqué at midday on Friday. "In the face of the State's stubborn determination to impose constitutional change, we denounce the State's irresponsibility and hold it responsible for the loss of human life, the atrocities and the devastation of the country's economic fabric." The CCAT says it is deeply affected by the loss of these lives, "those of our young people murdered by militias backed by the State and non-independence leaders, and that of the young gendarme". In this press release, the cell coordinating field actions calls for appeasement. "A time for appeasement to halt the escalation of violence." He added: "It's a break in our fight. It expresses the CCAT's determination to preserve life. We're keeping up the pressure through our presence at phase 2.5 on the ground, maintaining filtering traffic for all citizens."
- Roch Wamytan, President of the Congress of New Caledonia said "The context" is not favorable to "discussions with the President of the Republic", after the cancellation of the videoconference proposed to Caledonian elected representatives by Emmanuel Macron. "How can you discuss with the President of the Republic under these conditions?" he

continued. "We accepted the principle of discussions, except that to be able to meet the President of the Republic and listen to what he had to say to us, it was normal to prepare in advance. For me, it wasn't possible to do that today."

- French Justice Minister Eric Dupond-Moretti has called on prosecutors to "take the strongest possible action against the perpetrators of the violence" and also indicated he was considering transferring the "criminals" to mainland France.
- French Home Affairs and Overseas minister Gérald Darmanin told public TV channel France 2 he had placed 10 leaders of the CCAT (an organisation linked with FLNKS) under home detention. "This is a Mafia-like body which I do not amalgamate with political pro-independence parties...[CCAT] is a group that claims itself to be pro-independence and commits looting, murders and violence," "I have numerous elements which show this is a Mafia-like, violent organisation that loots stores and shoots real bullets at (French) gendarmes, sets businesses on fire and attacks even pro-independence institutions." "Massive reinforcements were to arrive shortly and the French state would "totally regain control", he said.
- The National Council of Chiefs of the Indigenous Kanak condemned "all acts of vandalism and gun violence", but rejected the allegations that the pro-independence movement was involved in the deadly violence. Grand Chief Hippolyte Sinewami-Htamumu expressed full support for the pro-independence group, which has mobilised more than a hundred thousand people "of all ages and from all backgrounds" in peaceful protests in recent months in the capital, Nouméa, and throughout the island. "This is not a 'terrorist group' or 'mafia group', as certain political leaders want us to believe."
- Romuald Pidjo, from the CCAT's [a pro-independence political group] Kanak delegation in Paris, on the anger of young people in Nouméa's working-class neighbourhoods [where some of the worst violence has taken place]. "These are people who are very disadvantaged, people who have been left behind. And what do they see, all these people, every day? They see people who've come from mainland France, who have big cars. And they have nothing! The straw that broke the camel's back was this constitutional bill in which the state is going to say: 'We're going to continue to bring in people who are going to crush you, who are going to take everything in this country'."
- Leaders of a Kanak Workers Union in Paris appealed for calm and said they were deeply saddened by deaths in their faraway homeland. "We wish to see the French government make a strong political statement rather than send troops," union leader Rock Haocas told reporters. "Starting a conversation would be a strong political statement."
- Cook Islands Prime Minister Mark Brown [and outgoing PIF Chair] said greater autonomy for the indigenous Kanak population is needed. "If there's one thing that specific countries value, it is the sovereignty and independence. To be able to have control over the destiny of your own country." "My initial view of the unrest that's occurring in Caledonia, it is cause to recognise greater autonomy and greater independence from the people on those islands. "As a member of the Forum now, we will be able to provide support assistance to these member countries as to the best way forward without trying to try to avoid any escalation of conflict."
- Henry Puna, outgoing secretary-general of the Pacific Islands Forum told journalists at his final news conference that "to see the collapse [and], protesting is very unfortunate", but it was predictable. He said the issue "has been boiling" since the 2021 independence referendum in the French territory, the third and final vote under the Nouméa Accord, which was boycotted by the pro-indigenous Kanak population. He said he was there in December 2021 to monitor the independence referendum when it was taken and "it was unfortunate that it was allowed to go ahead during that time". "We were in the middle of [the] Covid [pandemic] and the Kanak custom is that when somebody passes the mourn that for one year. So they weren't allowed that freedom. "As a result, they didn't want to

take part in the referendum because they couldn't go against their tradition and go campaigning or do other work. That's disrespectful for the custom."

- Vanuatu's prime minister, Charlot Salwai (also chairman of the Melanesian Spearhead Group, which also includes Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands) said the indiscriminate destruction of property would affect New Caledonia's economy in a big way and have a cascading effect on the lives of all New Caledonians, including Kanaks. He said France should establish dialogue with FLNKS, which has condemned the violence, and annul the constitutional reform that sparked the crisis. "These events could have been avoided if the French government had listened."
- French High Commissioner in Noumea Louis Le Franc said in a televised news conference the protesters were causing a "dire situation" for medicine and food for the population. He said main and secondary roads in Noumea were blocked by barricades with burning cars and car carcasses, some with booby traps.
- Australia's foreign affairs minister, Penny Wong, said Australians were advised to reconsider their need to travel to New Caledonia due to "civil unrest, travel disruption and limited essential services". "Again I repeat and take this opportunity to repeat Australia's call for calm. We respect and support the referendum process ... and the discussions under way between all parties, and encourage all parties to work together cooperatively to shape the future of New Caledonia."
- Labour Party Deputy Leader Carmel Sepuloni said the growing unrest was a concern. At last year's Pacific Islands Forum, French Polynesian representatives were already expressing concern about how some policies from the French government might affect its indigenous population, she said.

## Background

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s6(a)

Released under the Official Information Act



s6(a)

Released under the Official Information Act

**From:** [Noumea.Intel](#)  
**To:** [NOUMEA](#); [PACPF](#); [DCE](#); [...PACIFIC POSTS](#); [DS AAG](#); [DS EMA](#); [DS MLG](#); [AUS](#); [EUR](#); [ISED](#); [SORD Security](#); [CON](#); [PARIS](#); [FM.P/S MFA \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.P/S Associate MFA \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.Defence \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.DPMC \(FPA\) \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.Police \(Seemail\)](#); [s6\(a\)](#) [FM.Police \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.Customs Service \(Seemail\)](#); [PACMM](#); [PACREG](#); [PHM](#); [DEVPR](#); [DEVPCO](#); [...EUROPEAN POSTS](#)  
**Cc:** [Noumea.ResponseManager](#); [Noumea.Controller](#); [Noumea.MinLiaison](#); [Noumea.ConsularRM](#); [Noumea.AssistedDepartures](#); [Noumea.Logistics](#); [Noumea.Planning](#); [Noumea.Intel](#); [SCMU@dpmc.govt.nz](#); [fiona.dally@mbie.govt.nz](#); [chris.shaw@mbie.govt.nz](#); [mike.hill@caa.govt.nz](#); [Ben.king@dpmc.govt.nz](#); [...YEOMANS, Sally \(Inet\)](#); [Vanessa.berry@customs.govt.nz](#); [sean.bolton@dpmc.govt.nz](#); [Cherie.blithe@dpmc.govt.nz](#); [c.vandermeulen@transport.govt.nz](#); [KANE, Jared \(PEP\)](#); [Sally.Giles@health.govt.nz](#); [Michael.inglis@mpi.govt.nz](#); [sarah.tuihalanginie@mpi.govt.nz](#); [zubair.ali@mpi.govt.nz](#); [Miguel.Navarro@mpi.govt.nz](#)  
**Subject:** FORMAL MESSAGE: SITREP 11: New Caledonia Unrest - Sunday 19 May  
**Date:** Sunday, 19 May 2024 6:58:27 pm

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[RESTRICTED]

## Executive Summary SitRep 11: New Caledonia Unrest – Sunday 19 May

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### Key media messages

- New Zealand is seriously concerned about the situation and violent protests in Noumea.
- The safety of New Zealanders in New Caledonia is an urgent priority for us.
- We are aware of around 250 New Zealanders in New Caledonia.
- New Zealanders are urged to keep their SafeTravel Registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their 'departure date' is updated.
- New Zealand authorities have now completed preparations for NZDF flights to bring New Zealanders in New Caledonia home while commercial flights are not operating. We await approval from French authorities as to when these flights are safe to proceed.
- *[If raised: independence of New Caledonia]* The question of independence is one for the people of New Caledonia to decide with France. We acknowledge that the political and economic situation in New Caledonia is challenging and reiterate calls on all Parties to find a solution. We hope that peace and calm will prevail.
- **s6(a)** The immediate priority must be for all sides to take steps to de-escalate the situation, so that there can be dialogue and calm. No matter your views on the political arrangements in New Caledonia, everyone should agree that violence is harmful to every community there.
- *[If asked why the Consulate in Noumea is closed]* Due to the State of Emergency in New Caledonia, and the security requirement to stay home/in place, Consulate staff are working remotely. Callers to the Consulate are being directed to New Zealand's 24/7 Consular Emergency line.
- *[If raised: PIF Members and Secretariat comments on crisis]* We recognise and share the concern felt among PIF Members at the recent violence. We engage in a consistent manner with all Forum Members, including New Caledonia, on PIF matters and put high value on the centrality and unity of the PIF. It is for individual countries to make their own assessments on the situation in New Caledonia. New Zealand has been very clear on the need for all sides to take steps to de-escalate, so that there can be dialogue and calm.
- **s6(a)**

s9(2)(g)(i)

In Noumea

- New Zealand s6(a) assisted departure flights proposed for today (Sunday 19 May) were not approved by the Noumea authorities on security grounds. We were told that Sunday is the busiest day so far in the crisis for French military logistics with near constant flights between Magenta and Tontouta international airport.
- Another person has been killed and two more injured in an exchange of gunfire on Saturday 18 May as they tried to pass a barricade near Kaala-Gomen in the far north of the territory. This brings the death toll to six, including two gendarmes and three Kanak.
- s9(2)(a)
- Access to both the domestic Magenta airport and Tontouta airport is still not secure. French Interior Minister Gérald Darmanin announced the launch of a vast policing operation today, mobilizing 600 personnel to secure the road between Nouméa and La Tontouta International Airport. French officials have said the road was cleared this morning of protestors/rioters, but is not yet open due to the large number of wrecks on the road. The main Tontouta airport will remain closed until at least 9am on Tuesday 21 May. More than 3,500 Caledonians are stranded outside the country.
- While the situation appears to be stabilising, violence and clashes with security forces continue. Revised damage assessments estimate the cost at around XPF 40 billion (approximately NZ\$590 million). An estimated 2,000 jobs have also been impacted.
- The Ministry is still seeking confirmation of the availability of transport providers to support movement of people from hotels to airports. This will likely be needed for assisted departure flights or when commercial options reopen.
- The 6pm to 6am curfew will remain in force for the full duration of the state of emergency. This curfew covers the entire territory of New Caledonia. The local government has announced that schools will be closed next week.
- French reinforcements were focused on restoring freedom of movement by removing barricades and hazards; restocking supermarkets and pharmacies, and ensuring the efficient movement of supplies around New Caledonia; and supporting the function of health services, ensuring access was available to those in need.
- Ministry officials have confirmed that supermarkets are being restocked with some food items.

#### *In France*

- s6(a)
- s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

#### *New Zealand's response*

- MFA's tweet/X this morning confirmed preparations are complete for NZDF flights to bring

New Zealanders in New Caledonia home while commercial flights are not operating. The Minister also indicated those flights cannot proceed until we have approval from French authorities. The tweet/X was timed to complement Australian Foreign Minister Wong's tweet/X of similar nature.

- Minister Peters' comments about the possibility of an NZDF plane assisting with departures from New Caledonia are being widely reported in the [NZ Herald](#) Saturday 18 May, and [RNZ](#) and [Newshub](#) Friday 17 May.
- The Ministry has requested a call between MFA and the French Foreign Minister. Officials are also exploring calls for MFA with the Prime Ministers of Fiji and Tonga, and with the French Interior Minister.
- s6(a)
- MFA spoke with Pacific Islands Forum Chair Prime Minister Mark Brown on Saturday 18 May. The discussion included New Zealand's desire to work closely with Pacific partners, and the role of the PIF to facilitate dialogue and promote de-escalation in the region.

### **Consular response**

- We are aware of around 250 New Zealanders in New Caledonia. New Zealanders in New Caledonia are urged to register on SafeTravel and keep their registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their 'departure date' is updated.
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia should stay in place and avoid all protests, monitor local media for developments, and comply with any instructions and restrictions issued by local authorities.
- Post and Consular Call Centre staff continue to conduct welfare checks on Kiwis in New Caledonia. Since the unrest erupted, Ministry officials have met with over 100 Kiwis at hotels to discuss updates and answer questions. A Ministry official and a representative of Air New Zealand met today with Kiwis at two Noumea hotels. Approximately 60 people were present. Another meeting is planned for tomorrow.
- New Zealand's current travel alert level for all of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential travel** (Level 3 of 4). This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.

## ANNEX: Full SitRep 11: New Caledonia Unrest – Sunday 19 May

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### **Key media messages**

#### *Political situation*

- New Zealand is seriously concerned about the situation and violent protests in Noumea.
- The immediate priority must be for all sides to take steps to de-escalate the situation and have constructive dialogue. We call for calm to enable talks to resume.
- [If raised: independence of New Caledonia]* The question of independence is one for the people of New Caledonia to decide with France. We acknowledge that the political and economic situation in New Caledonia is challenging and reiterate calls on all Parties to find a solution. We hope that peace and calm will prevail.
- s6(a)

The immediate priority

must be for all sides to take steps to de-escalate the situation, so that there can be dialogue and calm. No matter your views on the political arrangements in New Caledonia, everyone should agree that violence is harmful to every community there.

- *[If asked about assisted departures]* New Zealand authorities have now completed preparations for NZDF flights to bring New Zealanders in New Caledonia home while commercial flights are not operating. We await approval from French authorities as to when these flights are safe to proceed.
- *[If raised: PIF Members and Secretariat comments on crisis]* The Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) is the region's pre-eminent political entity and it is understandable that Forum Members and the PIF Secretariat are following developments in New Caledonia closely. We recognise and share the concern felt among Forum Members at the recent violence. We engage in a consistent manner with all Forum Members, including New Caledonia, on PIF matters and put high value on the centrality and unity of the PIF. It is for individual countries to make their own assessments on the situation in New Caledonia. New Zealand has been very clear on the need for all sides to take steps to de-escalate, so that there can be dialogue and calm.
- s6(a)

#### *Consular response*

- We are aware of around 250 New Zealanders in New Caledonia.
- New Zealanders are urged to keep their SafeTravel Registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their 'departure date' is updated.
- New Zealanders in need of immediate consular assistance should contact the 24/7 Consular Emergency line on +64 99 20 20 20.
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia should stay in place and avoid all protests, monitor local media for developments, and comply with any instructions and restrictions issued by local authorities.
- Post and Consular Call Centre staff continue to conduct welfare checks on Kiwis in New Caledonia. Since the unrest erupted, Ministry officials in Noumea have met with over 100 Kiwis at hotels to discuss updates and answer questions.
- Officials are regularly speaking with New Caledonian authorities regarding airport operations and access, and ongoing needs in relation to critical supplies such as food and medicine.
- At present, with the Tontouta international airport remaining closed, there is no safe way to leave New Caledonia.
- New Zealand's current travel alert level for all of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential travel** (Level 3 of 4). This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.
- We recommend that all travellers check with their airline for any updates on flight bookings. Travellers should also contact their travel insurance provider if travel has been disrupted.
- *[If asked about assisted departures]* New Zealand authorities have now completed preparations for NZDF flights to bring New Zealanders in New Caledonia home while commercial flights are not operating. We await approval from French authorities as to when these flights are safe to proceed.
- *[If asked why the Consulate in Noumea is closed]* Due to the State of Emergency in New

Caledonia, and the security requirement to stay home/in place, Consulate staff are working remotely. Callers to the Consulate are being directed to New Zealand's 24/7 Consular Emergency line.

## Latest developments

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### **Key developments**

#### *In Noumea*

- New Zealand <sup>s6(a)</sup> assisted departure flights proposed for today (Sunday 19 May) were not approved by the Noumea authorities on security grounds. We were told that Sunday is in fact the busiest day so far in the crisis for the French resupply and military deployments with near constant flights between Magenta and Tontouta international airport.
- One person has been killed and two more injured in an exchange of gunfire on Saturday 18 May as they tried to pass a barricade near Kaala-Gomen. This brings the death toll to six, including 2 gendarmes and 3 Kanak. A body was also found in Noumea harbour – the circumstances of this death are not yet clear and may be unrelated.
- <sup>s9(2)(a)</sup>
- We have received information from some New Zealand and Dutch tourists that they have been told to move from their current location (Hienghène, five hours' drive north of Noumea), two hours south to the Hibiscus Hotel in Kone. Rumours of threatened violence are spreading in this area.
- Access to both the domestic Magenta airport and Tontouta airport is still not secure. French Interior Minister **Gérald Darmanin** announced the launch of a vast policing operation today, mobilizing 600 personnel to secure the road between **Nouméa and La Tontouta International Airport**. French officials have said the road was cleared this morning of protestors/rioters, but is not yet open due to the large number of wrecks on the road. The main Tontouta airport will remain closed until at least 9am on Tuesday 21 May. **More than 3,500 Caledonians are stranded outside the country.**
- While the situation appears to be stabilising, violence and clashes with security forces continue. Revised damage assessments estimate the cost at around XPF 40 billion (approximately NZ\$590 million). An estimated 2,000 jobs have also been impacted.
- The Ministry is still seeking confirmation of the availability of transport providers to support movement of people from hotels to airports. This will likely be needed for assisted departure flights or when commercial options reopen.
- There are still outer suburbs of Noumea that remain largely inaccessible, including by police forces who are generally the target of the violence. A "demining" exercise would need to be carried out before the safety of the roads could be guaranteed.
- The 6pm to 6am curfew will remain in force for the full duration of the state of emergency. This curfew covers the entire territory of New Caledonia. **The local government has announced that schools will be closed next week.**
- French reinforcements were focused on restoring freedom of movement by removing barricades and hazards; restocking supermarkets and pharmacies, and ensuring the efficient movement of supplies around New Caledonia; and supporting the function of health services, ensuring access was available to those in need.

- French officials confirmed last night that New Caledonia has sufficient provisions of food and medicine, including additional supplies that have arrived in the port. **Ministry officials confirmed this morning that supermarkets are being restocked with some food items.**

#### *In France*

- s6(a)

- s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

#### *New Zealand's response*

- **MFA's tweet/X this morning confirmed preparations are complete for NZDF flights to bring New Zealanders in New Caledonia home while commercial flights are not operating. The Minister also indicated those flights cannot proceed until we have approval from French authorities. The tweet/X was timed to complement Australian Foreign Minister Wong's tweet/X of similar nature.**

— Minister Peters' comments about the possibility of an NZDF plane assisting with departures from New Caledonia are being widely reported in the [NZ Herald](#) [Saturday 18 May], and [RNZ](#) and [Newshub](#) [Friday 17 May].

- While in Vanuatu, the Minister addressed the situation in a press conference. [View here](#).
- The Minister of Foreign Affairs issued a press release on 16 May on the situation in New Caledonia: "NZ calls for calm, constructive dialogue in New Caledonia". [Read here](#).
- s6(a)

- MFA spoke with Pacific Islands Forum Chair Prime Minister Mark Brown at 3:30pm Saturday 18 May. The discussion included New Zealand's desire to work with Pacific partners to help calm the situation down, and the role of the PIF to facilitate dialogue and promote de-escalation in the region. Officials are also exploring calls for MFA with the Prime Ministers of Fiji and Tonga.

#### *Consular*

- We are aware of around 250 New Zealanders in New Caledonia. New Zealanders are urged to keep their SafeTravel Registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their 'departure date' is updated.
- MFAT has upgraded SafeTravel alert level to Level 3 (out of 4) for the whole of New Caledonia "**Avoid non-essential travel**" in New Caledonia due to ongoing civil unrest.

- Post and Consular Call Centre staff continue to conduct welfare checks on Kiwis in New Caledonia. Since the unrest erupted, Ministry officials have met with over 100 Kiwis at hotels to discuss updates and answer questions. **A Ministry official and a representative of Air New Zealand met today with Kiwis at two Noumea hotels. Approximately 60 people were present. Another meeting is planned for tomorrow.**

#### *Diplomatic outreach*

- New Zealand has formal consular obligations to Switzerland, Netherlands, and Samoa.  
s6(a)
- s6(b)(i)
- s6(b)(i)

#### *Staff welfare*

- All MFAT staff in Noumea are currently working remotely. All reported safe and well. MFAT head office is in regular contact and has prepared to deploy two additional staff to provide surge assistance in the coming days (should air travel allow).

#### *Contacts*

- The MFAT Emergency Coordination Centre will operate from 8am-7pm daily and through the weekend. Please direct emails to:
  - Incident controller [Noumea.Controller@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.Controller@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Response manager [Noumea.ResponseManager@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.ResponseManager@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Consular response manager [Noumea.ConsularRM@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.ConsularRM@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Intel [Noumea.Intel@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.Intel@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Ministerial liaison [Noumea.MinLiaison@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.MinLiaison@mfat.govt.nz)

#### *Media comments by other Leaders*

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- President Macron strongly condemned the "inacceptable violence, destruction, intimidation and assaults against persons, property and law enforcement agents" that has taken place in New Caledonia for the past three days. Macron has sent an invitation by way of a letter, to New Caledonia's politicians, for a meeting in Paris.
- French Prime Minister Gabriel Attal, "Everything is being done to restore order and calm that Caledonians deserve," after a meeting at the presidential palace on Wednesday. He said the situation "remains very tense, with looting, riots, arson and attacks, which are unbearable and unspeakable". Speaking before the National Assembly on Tuesday, underlined the opportunity for those talks to resume and called on New Caledonia's parties to "seize the opportunity of this extended hand" to resume dialogue. "Only dialogue will allow us to appease tensions. Our hand remains extended. We need an



inclusive political solution that can satisfy all stakeholders and that's why we are offering New Caledonian leaders to discuss and build together the future of New Caledonia", he told Parliament during question time.

- On Friday CCAT (an independence political party) issued a statement calling for "a time of calm to break the spiral of violence". The CCAT issued a new communiqué at midday on Friday. "In the face of the State's stubborn determination to impose constitutional change, we denounce the State's irresponsibility and hold it responsible for the loss of human life, the atrocities and the devastation of the country's economic fabric." The CCAT says it is deeply affected by the loss of these lives, "those of our young people murdered by militias backed by the State and non-independence leaders, and that of the young gendarme". In this press release, the cell coordinating field actions calls for appeasement. "A time for appeasement to halt the escalation of violence." He added: "It's a break in our fight. It expresses the CCAT's determination to preserve life. We're keeping up the pressure through our presence at phase 2.5 on the ground, maintaining filtering traffic for all citizens."
- Roch Wamytan, President of the Congress of New Caledonia said "The context" is not favourable to "discussions with the President of the Republic", after the cancellation of the videoconference proposed to Caledonian elected representatives by Emmanuel Macron. "How can you discuss with the President of the Republic under these conditions?" he continued. "We accepted the principle of discussions, except that to be able to meet the President of the Republic and listen to what he had to say to us, it was normal to prepare in advance. For me, it wasn't possible to do that today."
- French Justice Minister Eric Dupond-Moretti has called on prosecutors to "take the strongest possible action against the perpetrators of the violence" and also indicated he was considering transferring the "criminals" to mainland France.
- French Home Affairs and Overseas minister Gérald Darmanin told public TV channel France 2 he had placed 10 leaders of the CCAT (an organisation linked with FLNKS) under home detention. "This is a Mafia-like body which I do not amalgamate with political pro-independence parties...[CCAT] is a group that claims itself to be pro-independence and commits looting, murders and violence," "I have numerous elements which show this is a Mafia-like, violent organisation that loots stores and shoots real bullets at (French) gendarmes, sets businesses on fire and attacks even pro-independence institutions." "Massive reinforcements were to arrive shortly and the French state would "totally regain control", he said.
- The National Council of Chiefs of the Indigenous Kanak condemned "all acts of vandalism and gun violence", but rejected the allegations that the pro-independence movement was involved in the deadly violence. Grand Chief Hippolyte Sinewami-Htamumu expressed full support for the pro-independence group, which has mobilised more than a hundred thousand people "of all ages and from all backgrounds" in peaceful protests in recent months in the capital, Nouméa, and throughout the island. "This is not a 'terrorist group' or 'mafia group', as certain political leaders want us to believe."
- Romuald Pidjo, from the CCAT's [a pro-independence political group] Kanak delegation in Paris, on the anger of young people in Nouméa's working-class neighbourhoods [where some of the worst violence has taken place]. "These are people who are very disadvantaged, people who have been left behind. And what do they see, all these people, every day? They see people who've come from mainland France, who have big cars. And they have nothing! The straw that broke the camel's back was this constitutional bill in which the state is going to say: 'We're going to continue to bring in people who are going to crush you, who are going to take everything in this country'."
- Leaders of a Kanak Workers Union in Paris appealed for calm and said they were deeply saddened by deaths in their faraway homeland. "We wish to see the French government

make a strong political statement rather than send troops," union leader Rock Haocas told reporters. "Starting a conversation would be a strong political statement."

- Cook Islands Prime Minister Mark Brown [and outgoing PIF Chair] said greater autonomy for the indigenous Kanak population is needed. "If there's one thing that specific countries value, it is the sovereignty and independence. To be able to have control over the destiny of your own country." "My initial view of the unrest that's occurring in Caledonia, it is cause to recognise greater autonomy and greater independence from the people on those islands. "As a member of the Forum now, we will be able to provide support assistance to these member countries as to the best way forward without trying to try to avoid any escalation of conflict."
- Henry Puna, outgoing secretary-general of the Pacific Islands Forum told journalists at his final news conference that "to see the collapse [and], protesting is very unfortunate", but it was predictable. He said the issue "has been boiling" since the 2021 independence referendum in the French territory, the third and final vote under the Nouméa Accord, which was boycotted by the pro-indigenous Kanak population. He said he was there in December 2021 to monitor the independence referendum when it was taken and "it was unfortunate that it was allowed to go ahead during that time". "We were in the middle of [the] Covid [pandemic] and the Kanak custom is that when somebody passes they mourn that for one year. So they weren't allowed that freedom. "As a result, they didn't want to take part in the referendum because they couldn't go against their tradition and go campaigning or do other work. That's disrespectful for the custom."
- Vanuatu's prime minister, Charlot Salwai (also chairman of the Melanesian Spearhead Group, which also includes Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands) said the indiscriminate destruction of property would affect New Caledonia's economy in a big way and have a cascading effect on the lives of all New Caledonians, including Kanaks. He said France should establish dialogue with FLNKS, which has condemned the violence, and annul the constitutional reform that sparked the crisis. "These events could have been avoided if the French government had listened."
- French High Commissioner in Noumea Louis Le Franc said in a televised news conference the protesters were causing a "dire situation" for medicine and food for the population. He said main and secondary roads in Noumea were blocked by barricades with burning cars and car carcasses, some with booby traps.
- Australia's foreign affairs minister, Penny Wong, said Australians were advised to reconsider their need to travel to New Caledonia due to "civil unrest, travel disruption and limited essential services". "Again I repeat and take this opportunity to repeat Australia's call for calm. We respect and support the referendum process ... and the discussions under way between all parties, and encourage all parties to work together cooperatively to shape the future of New Caledonia."
- Labour Party Deputy Leader Carmel Sepuloni said the growing unrest was a concern. At last year's Pacific Islands Forum, French Polynesian representatives were already expressing concern about how some policies from the French government might affect its indigenous population, she said.

**From:** [Noumea.Intel](#)  
**To:** [NOUMEA](#); [PACPE](#); [DCE](#); [...PACIFIC POSTS](#); [DS AAG](#); [DS EMA](#); [DS MLG](#); [AUS](#); [EUR](#); [ISED](#); [SORD Security](#); [CON](#); [PARIS](#); [FM.P/S MFA \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.P/S Associate MFA \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.Defence \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.DPMC \(FPA\) \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.Police \(Seemail\)](#); [s6\(a\)](#) [FM.Police \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.Customs Service \(Seemail\)](#); [PACMM](#); [PACREG](#); [PHM](#); [DEVPP](#); [DEVFCO](#); [...EUROPEAN POSTS](#)  
**Cc:** [Noumea.ResponseManager](#); [Noumea.Controller](#); [Noumea.MinLiaison](#); [Noumea.ConsularRM](#); [Noumea.AssistedDepartures](#); [Noumea.Logistics](#); [Noumea.Planning](#); [Noumea.Intel](#); [SCMU@dpmc.govt.nz](#); [fiona.dally@mbie.govt.nz](#); [chris.shaw@mbie.govt.nz](#); [mike.hill@caa.govt.nz](#); [Ben.king@dpmc.govt.nz](#); [...YEOMANS\\_Sally \(Inet\)](#); [...YEOMANS\\_Sally \(Inet\)](#); [Vanessa.berry@customs.govt.nz](#); [sean.bolton@dpmc.govt.nz](#); [Cherie.bliithe@dpmc.govt.nz](#); [c.vandermeulen@transport.govt.nz](#); [KANE, Jared \(PEP\)](#); [Sally.Giles@health.govt.nz](#); [Michael.inglis@mpi.govt.nz](#); [sarah.tuihalangie@mpi.govt.nz](#); [zubair.ali@mpi.govt.nz](#); [Miguel.Navarro@mpi.govt.nz](#)  
**Subject:** FORMAL MESSAGE: SITREP 12: New Caledonia Unrest - Monday 20 May  
**Date:** Monday, 20 May 2024 10:12:00 am

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## Executive Summary SitRep 12: New Caledonia Unrest – Monday 20 May

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### **Key media messages**

- New Zealand is seriously concerned about the situation and violent protests in Noumea.
- The safety of New Zealanders in New Caledonia is an urgent priority for us.
- We are aware of around 250 New Zealanders in New Caledonia.
- New Zealanders are urged to keep their SafeTravel Registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their 'departure date' is updated.
- New Zealand stands ready to bring New Zealanders in New Caledonia home on NZDF flights as soon as French authorities give permission for these flights to proceed.
- *[If raised: independence of New Caledonia]* The question of independence is one for the people of New Caledonia to decide with France. We acknowledge that the political and economic situation in New Caledonia is challenging and reiterate calls on all Parties to find a solution. We hope that peace and calm will prevail.
- s6(a) The immediate priority must be for all sides to take steps to de-escalate the situation, so that there can be dialogue and calm. No matter your views on the political arrangements in New Caledonia, everyone should agree that violence is harmful to every community there.
- *[If asked why the Consulate in Noumea is closed]* Due to the State of Emergency in New Caledonia, and the security requirement to stay home/in place, Consulate staff are working remotely. Callers to the Consulate are being directed to New Zealand's 24/7 Consular Emergency line.
- *[If raised: PIF Members and Secretariat comments on crisis]* We recognise and share the concern felt among PIF Members at the recent violence. We engage in a consistent manner with all Forum Members, including New Caledonia, on PIF matters and put high value on the centrality and unity of the PIF. It is for individual countries to make their own assessments on the situation in New Caledonia. New Zealand has been very clear on the need for all sides to take steps to de-escalate, so that there can be dialogue and calm.
- s6(a)

s9(2)(g)(i)

*Assisted Departures*

- Options for assisted departures are currently being worked through, in close coordination with Australia. s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)
- In parallel, the Ministry continues to work on an assisted departure led by NZDF, which is contingent on approval by French authorities. The authorities have informed us that an uplift by C-130 is unlikely for Tuesday 21 May. s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

#### *In Noumea*

- The death toll from the unrest currently sits at six people.
- The French High Commissioner statement last night included that “Republican order here will be re-established whatever the cost”. He said that the authorities had regained control of the road between Noumea and the International Airport. Around 60 roadblocks had been dismantled, but the clean-up and repair operation would last several days. Due to this, the authorities assess that the road will not be useable until the weekend (i.e. Saturday 25 May) at the earliest.
- The High Commissioner also called on those with weapons to hand them in and warned of the potential consequences should they be used against trained French security forces.
- While the situation appears to be stabilising, violence and clashes with security forces continue. Damage assessments estimate the cost at around XPF 40 billion (approximately NZ\$590 million). An estimated 2,000 jobs have also been impacted.
- The Ministry is still seeking confirmation of the availability of transport providers to support movement of people from hotels to airports. This will likely be needed for assisted departure flights or when commercial options reopen.
- Ministry officials have confirmed that supermarkets are being restocked with some food items.

#### *New Zealand's response*

- MFAT and DFAT have prepared a draft joint letter from Ministers Peters and Wong to the French Ministers of Foreign Affairs and the Interior, which is expected to be sent later today. The letter urges the French Government to urgently facilitate assisted departure flights for New Zealanders, Australians and other nationals out of New Caledonia.

- s6(a)

Preparations are under way for a trilateral phone call between Minister Peters, and the Foreign Ministers of France and Australia. This is expected to take place this evening NZT.

- s6(a)

s6(a)

- Speaking from Italy this morning (New Zealand time) to *Morning Report*, Defence Minister Collins reaffirmed that NZDF stands ready to begin the assisted departures process for New Zealanders in New Caledonia as soon as French authorities give permission to do so.
- MFA's tweet/X Sunday 19 May confirmed preparations are complete for NZDF flights to bring New Zealanders in New Caledonia home while commercial flights are not operating. The Minister also indicated those flights cannot proceed until we have approval from French authorities. The tweet/X was timed to complement Australian Foreign Minister Wong's tweet/X of similar nature.
- Letters from MFA to the French High Commissioner in New Caledonia and the President of the Government of New Caledonia have been dispatched.

### **Consular response**

- We are aware of around 250 New Zealanders in New Caledonia. New Zealanders in New Caledonia are urged to register on SafeTravel and keep their registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their 'departure date' is updated.
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia should stay in place and avoid all protests, monitor local media for developments, and comply with any instructions and restrictions issued by local authorities.
- Post and Consular Call Centre staff continue to conduct welfare checks on Kiwis in New Caledonia. Since the unrest erupted, Ministry officials have met with over 100 Kiwis at hotels to discuss updates and answer questions. Another meeting is planned for today.
- New Zealand's current travel alert level for all of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential travel** (Level 3 of 4). This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.

## ANNEX: Full SitRep 12: New Caledonia Unrest – Monday 20 May

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### **Key media messages**

#### *Political situation*

- New Zealand is seriously concerned about the situation and violent protests in Noumea.
- The immediate priority must be for all sides to take steps to de-escalate the situation and have constructive dialogue. We call for calm to enable talks to resume.
- *[If raised: independence of New Caledonia]* The question of independence is one for the people of New Caledonia to decide with France. We acknowledge that the political and economic situation in New Caledonia is challenging and reiterate calls on all Parties to find a solution. We hope that peace and calm will prevail.
- s6(a) The immediate priority must be for all sides to take steps to de-escalate the situation, so that there can be dialogue and calm. No matter your views on the political arrangements in New Caledonia, everyone should agree that violence is harmful to every community there.
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- *[If raised: PIF Members and Secretariat comments on crisis]* The Pacific Islands Forum (PIF)

is the region's pre-eminent political entity and it is understandable that Forum Members and the PIF Secretariat are following developments in New Caledonia closely. We recognise and share the concern felt among Forum Members at the recent violence. We engage in a consistent manner with all Forum Members, including New Caledonia, on PIF matters and put high value on the centrality and unity of the PIF. It is for individual countries to make their own assessments on the situation in New Caledonia. New Zealand has been very clear on the need for all sides to take steps to de-escalate, so that there can be dialogue and calm.

- s6(a)

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- Officials are regularly speaking with New Caledonian authorities regarding airport operations and access, and ongoing needs in relation to critical supplies such as food and medicine.
- At present, with the Tontouta international airport remaining closed, there is no safe way to leave New Caledonia.
- New Zealand's current travel alert level for all of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential travel** (Level 3 of 4). This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.
- We recommend that all travellers check with their airline for any updates on flight bookings. Travellers should also contact their travel insurance provider if travel has been disrupted.
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#### Latest developments

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##### **Key developments**

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- s6(a)  
Preparations are under way for a trilateral phone call between Minister Peters, and the Foreign Ministers of France and Australia. This may take place this evening NZT.

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- The 6pm to 6am curfew will remain in force for the full duration of the state of emergency. This curfew covers the entire territory of New Caledonia. The local government has announced that schools will be closed next week.
- French reinforcements were focused on restoring freedom of movement by removing

barricades and hazards; restocking supermarkets and pharmacies, and ensuring the efficient movement of supplies around New Caledonia; and supporting the function of health services, ensuring access was available to those in need.

- French officials confirmed last night that New Caledonia has sufficient provisions of food and medicine, including additional supplies that have arrived in the port. Ministry officials confirmed this morning that supermarkets are being restocked with some food items.

#### *New Zealand's response*

- s6(a)
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- While in Vanuatu, the Minister addressed the situation in a press conference. [View here](#).
- The Minister of Foreign Affairs issued a press release on 16 May on the situation in New Caledonia: "NZ calls for calm, constructive dialogue in New Caledonia". [Read here](#).
- s6(a)
- MFA spoke with Pacific Islands Forum Chair Prime Minister Mark Brown at 3:30pm Saturday 18 May. The discussion included New Zealand's desire to work with Pacific partners to help calm the situation down, and the role of the PIF to facilitate dialogue and promote de-escalation in the region. Officials are also exploring calls for MFA with the Prime Ministers of Fiji and Tonga.

#### *Consular*

- We are aware of around 250 New Zealanders in New Caledonia. New Zealanders are urged to keep their SafeTravel Registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their 'departure date' is updated.
- MFAT has upgraded SafeTravel alert level to Level 3 (out of 4) for the whole of New Caledonia "**Avoid non-essential travel**" in New Caledonia due to ongoing civil unrest.
- Post and Consular Call Centre staff continue to conduct welfare checks on Kiwis in New



Caledonia. Since the unrest erupted, Ministry officials have met with over 100 Kiwis at hotels to discuss updates and answer questions. A Ministry official and a representative of Air New Zealand met yesterday with Kiwis at two Noumea hotels. Approximately 60 people were present. Another meeting is planned for tomorrow.

- s9(2)(a)

#### *Diplomatic outreach*

- New Zealand has formal consular obligations to Switzerland, Netherlands, and Samoa.  
s6(a)
- s6(a), s6(b)(i)
  
- s6(a), s6(b)(i)

#### *Staff welfare*

- All MFAT staff in Noumea are currently working remotely. All reported safe and well. MFAT head office is in regular contact and has prepared to deploy two additional staff to provide surge assistance in the coming days (should air travel allow).
- s9(2)(a)

#### *Contacts*

- The MFAT Emergency Coordination Centre will operate from 8am-7pm daily and through the weekend. Please direct emails to:
  - Incident controller [Noumea.Controller@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.Controller@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Response manager [Noumea.ResponseManager@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.ResponseManager@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Consular response manager [Noumea.ConsularRM@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.ConsularRM@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Intel [Noumea.Intel@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.Intel@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Ministerial liaison [Noumea.MinLiaison@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.MinLiaison@mfat.govt.nz)

#### Media comments by other Leaders

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- New Caledonian representative in the French National Assembly Nicolas Metzdorf -s6(a)  
returned to New Caledonia last night on board a French military plane. In a radio interview this morning, Metzdorf labelled the CCAT a “terrorist organisation” and also criticised the state for not being prepared for the current situation. Metzdorf also stated his view that the legislative process to open the electoral roll had to continue; if not it would be giving in to the CCAT, and would mean

that their actions had been successful.

- President Macron strongly condemned the "inacceptable violence, destruction, intimidation and assaults against persons, property and law enforcement agents" that has taken place in New Caledonia for the past three days. Macron has sent an invitation by way of a letter, to New Caledonia's politicians, for a meeting in Paris.
- French Prime Minister Gabriel Attal, "Everything is being done to restore order and calm that Caledonians deserve," after a meeting at the presidential palace on Wednesday. He said the situation "remains very tense, with looting, riots, arson and attacks, which are unbearable and unspeakable". Speaking before the National Assembly on Tuesday, underlined the opportunity for those talks to resume and called on New Caledonia's parties to "seize the opportunity of this extended hand" to resume dialogue. "Only dialogue will allow us to appease tensions. Our hand remains extended. We need an inclusive political solution that can satisfy all stakeholders and that's why we are offering New Caledonian leaders to discuss and build together the future of New Caledonia", he told Parliament during question time.
- On Friday CCAT (an independence political party) issued a statement calling for "a time of calm to break the spiral of violence". The CCAT issued a new communique at midday on Friday. "In the face of the State's stubborn determination to impose constitutional change, we denounce the State's irresponsibility and hold it responsible for the loss of human life, the atrocities and the devastation of the country's economic fabric." The CCAT says it is deeply affected by the loss of these lives, "those of our young people murdered by militias backed by the State and non-independence leaders, and that of the young gendarme". In this press release, the cell coordinating field actions calls for appeasement. "A time for appeasement to halt the escalation of violence." He added: "It's a break in our fight. It expresses the CCAT's determination to preserve life. We're keeping up the pressure through our presence at phase 2.5 on the ground, maintaining filtering traffic for all citizens."
- Roch Wamytan, President of the Congress of New Caledonia said "The context" is not favourable to "discussions with the President of the Republic", after the cancellation of the videoconference proposed to Caledonian elected representatives by Emmanuel Macron. "How can you discuss with the President of the Republic under these conditions?" he continued. "We accepted the principle of discussions, except that to be able to meet the President of the Republic and listen to what he had to say to us, it was normal to prepare in advance. For me, it wasn't possible to do that today."
- French Justice Minister Eric Dupond-Moretti has called on prosecutors to "take the strongest possible action against the perpetrators of the violence" and also indicated he was considering transferring the "criminals" to mainland France.
- French Home Affairs and Overseas minister Gérald Darmanin told public TV channel France 2 he had placed 10 leaders of the CCAT (an organisation linked with FLNKS) under home detention. "This is a Mafia-like body which I do not amalgamate with political pro-independence parties...[CCAT] is a group that claims itself to be pro-independence and commits looting, murders and violence," "I have numerous elements which show this is a Mafia-like, violent organisation that loots stores and shoots real bullets at (French) gendarmes, sets businesses on fire and attacks even pro-independence institutions." "Massive reinforcements were to arrive shortly and the French state would "totally regain control", he said.
- The National Council of Chiefs of the Indigenous Kanak condemned "all acts of vandalism and gun violence", but rejected the allegations that the pro-independence movement was involved in the deadly violence. Grand Chief Hippolyte Sinewami-Htamumu expressed full support for the pro-independence group, which has mobilised more than a hundred thousand people "of all ages and from all backgrounds" in peaceful protests in recent

months in the capital, Nouméa, and throughout the island. "This is not a 'terrorist group' or 'mafia group', as certain political leaders want us to believe."

- Romuald Pidjo, from the CCAT's [a pro-independence political group] Kanak delegation in Paris, on the anger of young people in Nouméa's working-class neighbourhoods [where some of the worst violence has taken place]. "These are people who are very disadvantaged, people who have been left behind. And what do they see, all these people, every day? They see people who've come from mainland France, who have big cars. And they have nothing! The straw that broke the camel's back was this constitutional bill in which the state is going to say: 'We're going to continue to bring in people who are going to crush you, who are going to take everything in this country'."
- Leaders of a Kanak Workers Union in Paris appealed for calm and said they were deeply saddened by deaths in their faraway homeland. "We wish to see the French government make a strong political statement rather than send troops," union leader Rock Haocas told reporters. "Starting a conversation would be a strong political statement."
- Cook Islands Prime Minister Mark Brown [and outgoing PIF Chair] said greater autonomy for the indigenous Kanak population is needed. "If there's one thing that specific countries value, it is the sovereignty and independence. To be able to have control over the destiny of your own country." "My initial view of the unrest that's occurring in Caledonia, it is cause to recognise greater autonomy and greater independence from the people on those islands. "As a member of the Forum now, we will be able to provide support assistance to these member countries as to the best way forward without trying to try to avoid any escalation of conflict."
- Henry Puna, outgoing secretary-general of the Pacific Islands Forum told journalists at his final news conference that "to see the collapse [and], protesting is very unfortunate", but it was predictable. He said the issue "has been boiling" since the 2021 independence referendum in the French territory, the third and final vote under the Nouméa Accord, which was boycotted by the pro-indigenous Kanak population. He said he was there in December 2021 to monitor the independence referendum when it was taken and "it was unfortunate that it was allowed to go ahead during that time". "We were in the middle of [the] Covid [pandemic] and the Kanak custom is that when somebody passes they mourn that for one year. So they weren't allowed that freedom. "As a result, they didn't want to take part in the referendum because they couldn't go against their tradition and go campaigning or do other work. That's disrespectful for the custom."
- Vanuatu's prime minister, Charlot Salwai (also chairman of the Melanesian Spearhead Group, which also includes Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands) said the indiscriminate destruction of property would affect New Caledonia's economy in a big way and have a cascading effect on the lives of all New Caledonians, including Kanaks. He said France should establish dialogue with FLNKS, which has condemned the violence, and annul the constitutional reform that sparked the crisis. "These events could have been avoided if the French government had listened."
- French High Commissioner in Noumea Louis Le Franc said in a televised news conference the protesters were causing a "dire situation" for medicine and food for the population. He said main and secondary roads in Noumea were blocked by barricades with burning cars and car carcasses, some with booby traps.
- Australia's foreign affairs minister, Penny Wong, said Australians were advised to reconsider their need to travel to New Caledonia due to "civil unrest, travel disruption and limited essential services". "Again I repeat and take this opportunity to repeat Australia's call for calm. We respect and support the referendum process ... and the discussions under way between all parties, and encourage all parties to work together cooperatively to shape the future of New Caledonia."

- Labour Party Deputy Leader Carmel Sepuloni said the growing unrest was a concern. At last year's Pacific Islands Forum, French Polynesian representatives were already expressing concern about how some policies from the French government might affect its indigenous population, she said.

Released under the Official Information Act

**From:** [Noumea.Intel](#)  
**To:** [NOUMEA](#); [PACPE](#); [DCE](#); [...PACIFIC POSTS](#); [DS AAG](#); [DS EMA](#); [DS MLG](#); [AUS](#); [EUR](#); [ISED](#); [SORD Security](#); [CON](#); [PARIS](#); [FM.P/S MFA \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.P/S Associate MFA \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.Defence \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.DPMC \(FPA\) \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.Police \(Seemail\)](#); [s6\(a\)](#) [FM.Police \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.Customs Service \(Seemail\)](#); [PACMM](#); [PACREG](#); [PHM](#); [DEVPP](#); [DEVFCO](#); [...EUROPEAN POSTS](#)  
**Cc:** [Noumea.ResponseManager](#); [Noumea.Controller](#); [Noumea.MinLiaison](#); [Noumea.ConsularRM](#); [Noumea.AssistedDepartures](#); [Noumea.Logistics](#); [Noumea.Planning](#); [Noumea.Intel](#); [SCMU@dpmc.govt.nz](#); [fiona.dally@mbie.govt.nz](#); [chris.shaw@mbie.govt.nz](#); [mike.hill@caa.govt.nz](#); [Ben.king@dpmc.govt.nz](#); [...YEOMANS\\_Sally \(Inet\)](#); [...YEOMANS\\_Sally \(Inet\)](#); [Vanessa.berry@customs.govt.nz](#); [sean.bolton@dpmc.govt.nz](#); [Cherie.bliithe@dpmc.govt.nz](#); [c.vandermeulen@transport.govt.nz](#); [KANE, Jared \(PEP\)](#); [Chris.Scahill@TeWhatuOra.govt.nz](#); [Michael.inglis@mpi.govt.nz](#); [sarah.tuihalangingie@mpi.govt.nz](#); [zubair.ali@mpi.govt.nz](#); [Miguel.Navarro@mpi.govt.nz](#); [Julian.Grey@dpmc.govt.nz](#); [noc@mpi.govt.nz](#); [SUE.EDEN@nzdf.mil.nz](#); [David.Williams@nzdf.mil.nz](#); [Contact](#); [LAW\\_Anna \(PRD\)](#)  
**Subject:** FORMAL MESSAGE: SITREP 13: New Caledonia Unrest - Monday 20 May  
**Date:** Monday, 20 May 2024 6:48:58 pm

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[RESTRICTED]

## Executive Summary SitRep 13: New Caledonia Unrest – Monday 20 May

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### Key media messages

- New Zealand is seriously concerned about the situation and violent protests in Noumea.
  - The safety of New Zealanders in New Caledonia is an urgent priority for us.
  - We are aware of around 290 New Zealanders in New Caledonia.
  - New Zealanders are urged to keep their SafeTravel Registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their 'departure date' is updated.
  - New Zealand stands ready to bring New Zealanders in New Caledonia home on NZDF flights as soon as French authorities give permission for these flights to proceed.
  - New Zealand is exploring possible options, and working alongside Australia and other partners on their planning, to help get New Zealanders in New Caledonia home.
  - *[If asked about the specifics of the potential NZDF deployment]:* We are not able to share details on specific options at this stage.
  - *[If asked about transport on the ground/road access to airports, etc.]:* We continue to work with relevant authorities on the ground to understand security and access issues, including for travel to airports in Noumea.
  - *[If raised: independence of New Caledonia]* The question of independence is one for the people of New Caledonia to decide with France. We acknowledge that the political and economic situation in New Caledonia is challenging and reiterate calls on all Parties to find a solution. We hope that peace and calm will prevail.
- s6(a) The immediate priority must be for all sides to take steps to de-escalate the situation, so that there can be dialogue and calm. No matter your views on the political arrangements in New Caledonia, everyone should agree that violence is harmful to every community there.
- *[If asked why the Consulate in Noumea is closed]* Due to the State of Emergency in New Caledonia, and the security requirement to stay home/in place, Consulate staff are working remotely. Callers to the Consulate are being directed to New Zealand's 24/7 Consular Emergency line.
  - *[If raised: PIF Members and Secretariat comments on crisis]* We recognise and share the concern felt among PIF Members at the recent violence. We engage in a consistent manner with all Forum Members, including New Caledonia, on PIF matters and put high value on the centrality and unity of the PIF. It is for individual countries to make their own

assessments on the situation in New Caledonia. New Zealand has been very clear on the need for all sides to take steps to de-escalate, so that there can be dialogue and calm.

- s6(a)

s9(2)(g)(i)

#### *Assisted Departures*

- Officials continue to explore options for assisted departure in close collaboration with Australia. NZDF remain ready to deploy from Whenuapai, contingent on approval from French Authorities.

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

- In parallel, the Ministry continues to work on an assisted departure led by NZDF, which is contingent on approval by French authorities. Post in Noumea has been advised by the French High Commission that if French Ministers agree to the proposal on the trilateral call, then the NZDF assisted departure flight can go ahead. The C-130 can carry up to 46 passengers and NZDF flights require 12 hours' notice before departing. Officials are standing ready to organise this flight quickly should France agree and align with Australia's planning.

#### *In Noumea*

- The death toll from the unrest currently sits at six people.
- The French High Commissioner said that authorities had regained control of the road between Noumea and the International Airport. Around 60 roadblocks had been dismantled, but the clean-up and repair operation would last several days. Due to this, the authorities assess that the road will not be useable until the weekend (i.e. Saturday 25 May) at the earliest.
- While the situation appears to be stabilising, violence and clashes with security forces continue. Damage assessments estimate the cost at around XPF 40 billion (approximately NZ\$590 million). An estimated 2,000 jobs have also been impacted.
- Ministry officials have confirmed that supermarkets are being restocked with some food items. 20 shops have reopened and the New Caledonian Government have said they expect many of the shops to be restocked today.

#### *New Zealand's response*

- Ministers Peters and Wong have sent a letter to the French Ministers of Foreign Affairs and the Interior ahead of the trilateral call via the French Embassy in Wellington. The letter urges the French Government to urgently facilitate assisted departure flights for New Zealanders, Australians and other nationals out of New Caledonia.

- s6(a)

Preparations are under way for a trilateral phone call between Minister Peters and the Foreign Ministers of France and Australia. This is expected to take place at 7:30pm this evening NZT. Should the French Ministers agree to an assisted departure, officials will move quickly to arrange a flight for Tuesday 21 May.

- s6(a)

- MFA's tweet/X Sunday 19 May confirmed preparations are complete for NZDF flights to bring New Zealanders in New Caledonia home while commercial flights are not operating. The Minister also indicated those flights cannot proceed until we have approval from French authorities. The tweet/X was timed to complement Australian Foreign Minister Wong's tweet/X of similar nature.
- Letters from MFA to the French High Commissioner in New Caledonia and the President of the Government of New Caledonia have been dispatched.

### **Consular response**

- We are aware of around 290 New Zealanders in New Caledonia. New Zealanders in New Caledonia are urged to register on SafeTravel and keep their registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their 'departure date' is updated.
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia should stay in place and avoid all protests, monitor local media for developments, and comply with any instructions and restrictions issued by local authorities.
- Post and Consular Call Centre staff continue to conduct welfare checks on Kiwis in New Caledonia. Since the unrest erupted, Ministry officials have met with over 100 Kiwis at hotels to discuss updates and answer questions, and will continue to do so.
- New Zealand's current travel alert level for all of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential travel** (Level 3 of 4). This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.

## **ANNEX: Full SitRep 13: New Caledonia Unrest – Monday 20 May**

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### **Key media messages**

#### *Political situation*

- New Zealand is seriously concerned about the situation and violent protests in Noumea.
- The immediate priority must be for all sides to take steps to de-escalate the situation and have constructive dialogue. We call for calm to enable talks to resume.
- **New Zealand is exploring possible options, and working alongside Australia and other partners on their planning, to help get New Zealanders in New Caledonia home.**

- *[If asked about the specifics of the potential NZDF deployment]:* We are not able to share details on specific options at this stage.
- *[If asked about transport on the ground/road access to airports, etc.]:* We continue to work with relevant authorities on the ground to understand security and access issues, including for travel to airports in Noumea.
- *[If raised: independence of New Caledonia]* The question of independence is one for the people of New Caledonia to decide with France. We acknowledge that the political and economic situation in New Caledonia is challenging and reiterate calls on all Parties to find a solution. We hope that peace and calm will prevail.
- s6(a) The immediate priority must be for all sides to take steps to de-escalate the situation, so that there can be dialogue and calm. No matter your views on the political arrangements in New Caledonia, everyone should agree that violence is harmful to every community there.
- *[If asked about assisted departures]* New Zealand authorities have now completed preparations for NZDF flights to bring New Zealanders in New Caledonia home while commercial flights are not operating. We await approval from French authorities as to when these flights are safe to proceed.
- *[If raised: PIF Members and Secretariat comments on crisis]* The Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) is the region's pre-eminent political entity and it is understandable that Forum Members and the PIF Secretariat are following developments in New Caledonia closely. We recognise and share the concern felt among Forum Members at the recent violence. We engage in a consistent manner with all Forum Members, including New Caledonia, on PIF matters and put high value on the centrality and unity of the PIF. It is for individual countries to make their own assessments on the situation in New Caledonia. New Zealand has been very clear on the need for all sides to take steps to de-escalate, so that there can be dialogue and calm.
- s6(a)

#### *Consular response*

- We are aware of around 290 New Zealanders in New Caledonia.
- New Zealanders are urged to keep their SafeTravel Registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their 'departure date' is updated.
- New Zealanders in need of immediate consular assistance should contact the 24/7 Consular Emergency line on +64 99 20 20 20.
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia should stay in place and avoid all protests, monitor local media for developments, and comply with any instructions and restrictions issued by local authorities.
- Post and Consular Call Centre staff continue to conduct welfare checks on Kiwis in New Caledonia. Since the unrest erupted, Ministry officials in Noumea have met with over 100 Kiwis at hotels to discuss updates and answer questions.
- Officials are regularly speaking with New Caledonian authorities regarding airport operations and access, and ongoing needs in relation to critical supplies such as food and medicine.
- At present, with the Tontouta international airport remaining closed, there is no safe way to leave New Caledonia.
- New Zealand's current travel alert level for all of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential**



**travel** (Level 3 of 4). This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.

- We recommend that all travellers check with their airline for any updates on flight bookings. Travellers should also contact their travel insurance provider if travel has been disrupted.
- *[If asked about assisted departures]* New Zealand stands ready to bring New Zealanders in New Caledonia home on NZDF flights as soon as French authorities give permission for these flights to proceed.
- *[If asked why the Consulate in Noumea is closed]* Due to the State of Emergency in New Caledonia, and the security requirement to stay home/in place, Consulate staff are working remotely. Callers to the Consulate are being directed to New Zealand's 24/7 Consular Emergency line.

## Latest developments

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### **Key developments**

#### *Assisted Departures*

- Officials continue to explore options for assisted departure in close collaboration with Australia. NZDF remain ready to deploy from Whenuapai, but this is contingent on approval from French Authorities.

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

In parallel, the Ministry continues to work on an assisted departure led by NZDF, which is contingent on approval by French authorities. Post in Noumea has been advised by the French High Commission that if French Ministers agree to the proposal on the trilateral call, then the NZDF assisted departure flight can go ahead. The C-130 can carry up to 46 passengers and NZDF flights require 12 hours' notice before departing. Officials are standing ready to organise this flight quickly should France agree and align with Australia's planning.

- Ministers Peters and Wong have sent a letter to the French Ministers of Foreign Affairs and the Interior ahead of the trilateral call via the French Embassy in Wellington. The letter urges the French Government to urgently facilitate assisted departure flights for New Zealanders, Australians and other nationals out of New Caledonia.

- s6(a)

Preparations are under way for a trilateral phone call between Minister Peters and the Foreign Ministers of France and Australia. This is expected to take place at 7:30pm this evening NZT. Should the French Ministers agree to an assisted departure, officials will move quickly to arrange a flight for Tuesday 21 May.

#### *In Noumea*

- One person has been killed and two more injured in an exchange of gunfire on Saturday 18 May as they tried to pass a barricade near Kaala-Gomen. This brings the death toll to six, including 2 gendarmes and 3 Kanak. A body was also found in Noumea harbour – the circumstances of this death are not yet clear and may be unrelated.
- The French High Commissioner statement last night included that “Republican order here will be re-established whatever the cost”. He said that the authorities had regained control of the road between Noumea and the International Airport. Around 60 roadblocks had been dismantled, but the clean-up and repair operation would last several days. Due to this, the authorities assess that the road will not be useable until the weekend (i.e. Saturday 25 May) at the earliest.
- The High Commissioner also called on those with weapons to hand them in and warned of the potential consequences should they be used against trained French security forces.
- While the situation appears to be stabilising, violence and clashes with security forces continue. Revised damage assessments estimate the cost at around XPF 40 billion (approximately NZ\$590 million). An estimated 2,000 jobs have also been impacted.
- The Ministry is still seeking confirmation of the availability of transport providers to support movement of people from hotels to airports. This will likely be needed for assisted departure flights or when commercial options reopen.
- There are still outer suburbs of Noumea that remain largely inaccessible, including by police forces who are generally the target of the violence. A “demining” exercise would need to be carried out before the safety of the roads could be guaranteed.
- The 6pm to 6am curfew will remain in force for the full duration of the state of emergency. This curfew covers the entire territory of New Caledonia. The local government has announced that schools will be closed next week.
- French reinforcements were focused on restoring freedom of movement by removing barricades and hazards; restocking supermarkets and pharmacies, and ensuring the efficient movement of supplies around New Caledonia; and supporting the function of health services, ensuring access was available to those in need.
- French officials confirmed last night that New Caledonia has sufficient provisions of food and medicine, including additional supplies that have arrived in the port. Ministry officials confirmed this morning that supermarkets are being restocked with some food items. **20 shops have reopened and the New Caledonian Government have said many of the shops will be restocked Monday 20 May.**

#### *New Zealand’s response*

- s6(a)

- Speaking from Italy this morning/NZT to *Morning Report*, Defence Minister Collins reaffirmed that NZDF stands ready to begin the assisted departures process for New Zealanders in New Caledonia as soon as French authorities give permission to do so.
- MFA's tweet/X Sunday 19 May confirmed preparations are complete for NZDF flights to bring New Zealanders in New Caledonia home while commercial flights are not operating. The Minister also indicated those flights cannot proceed until we have approval from French authorities. The tweet/X was timed to complement Australian Foreign Minister Wong's tweet/X of similar nature.
- Minister Peters' comments about the possibility of an NZDF plane assisting with departures from New Caledonia are being widely reported in the [NZ Herald](#) [Saturday 18 May], and [RNZ](#) and [Newshub](#) [Friday 17 May].
- While in Vanuatu, the Minister addressed the situation in a press conference. [View here](#).
- The Minister of Foreign Affairs issued a press release on 16 May on the situation in New Caledonia: "NZ calls for calm, constructive dialogue in New Caledonia". [Read here](#).
- s6(a)

- MFA spoke with Pacific Islands Forum Chair Prime Minister Mark Brown at 3:30pm Saturday 18 May. The discussion included New Zealand's desire to work with Pacific partners to help calm the situation down, and the role of the PIF to facilitate dialogue and promote de-escalation in the region. Officials are also exploring calls for MFA with the Prime Ministers of Fiji and Tonga.

#### *Consular*

- We are aware of around 290 New Zealanders in New Caledonia. New Zealanders are urged to keep their SafeTravel Registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their 'departure date' is updated.
- MFAT has upgraded SafeTravel alert level to Level 3 (out of 4) for the whole of New Caledonia **"Avoid non-essential travel"** in New Caledonia due to ongoing civil unrest.
- Post and Consular Call Centre staff continue to conduct welfare checks on Kiwis in New Caledonia. Since the unrest erupted, Ministry officials have met with over 100 Kiwis at hotels to discuss updates and answer questions. A Ministry official and a representative of Air New Zealand met yesterday with Kiwis at two Noumea hotels. Approximately 60 people were present. Another meeting is planned for tomorrow.
- s9(2)(ba)(i)

#### *Diplomatic outreach*

- New Zealand has formal consular obligations to Switzerland, Netherlands, and Samoa.
- s6(a)
- s6(a), s6(b)(i)

s6(a), s6(b)(i)

- s6(a), s6(b)(i)

#### Staff welfare

- MFAT staff in NOU, who have been working remotely, have met in-person today. All reported safe and well. MFAT head office is in regular contact and has prepared to deploy four additional staff to provide surge assistance in the coming days (should air travel allow).
- s9(2)(a)

#### Contacts

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  - Consular response manager [Noumea.ConsularRM@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.ConsularRM@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Intel [Noumea.Intel@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.Intel@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Ministerial liaison [Noumea.MinLiaison@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.MinLiaison@mfat.govt.nz)

#### Media comments by other Leaders

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- New Caledonian representative in the French National Assembly Nicolas Metzdorf<sup>s6(a)</sup> returned to New Caledonia last night on board a French military plane. In a radio interview this morning, Metzdorf labelled the CCAT a "terrorist organisation" and also criticised the state for not being prepared for the current situation. Metzdorf also stated his view that the legislative process to open the electoral roll had to continue; if not it would be giving in to the CCAT, and would mean that their actions had been successful.
- President Macron strongly condemned the "inacceptable violence, destruction, intimidation and assaults against persons, property and law enforcement agents" that has taken place in New Caledonia for the past three days. Macron has sent an invitation by way of a letter, to New Caledonia's politicians, for a meeting in Paris.
- French Prime Minister Gabriel Attal, "Everything is being done to restore order and calm that Caledonians deserve," after a meeting at the presidential palace on Wednesday. He said the situation "remains very tense, with looting, riots, arson and attacks, which are unbearable and unspeakable". Speaking before the National Assembly on Tuesday, underlined the opportunity for those talks to resume and called on New Caledonia's parties to "seize the opportunity of this extended hand" to resume dialogue. "Only dialogue will allow us to appease tensions. Our hand remains extended. We need an inclusive political solution that can satisfy all stakeholders and that's why we are offering New Caledonian leaders to discuss and build together the future of New Caledonia", he told Parliament during question time.
- On Friday CCAT (an independence political party) issued a statement calling for "a time of

calm to break the spiral of violence". The CCAT issued a new communiqué at midday on Friday. "In the face of the State's stubborn determination to impose constitutional change, we denounce the State's irresponsibility and hold it responsible for the loss of human life, the atrocities and the devastation of the country's economic fabric." The CCAT says it is deeply affected by the loss of these lives, "those of our young people murdered by militias backed by the State and non-independence leaders, and that of the young gendarme". In this press release, the cell coordinating field actions calls for appeasement. "A time for appeasement to halt the escalation of violence." He added: "It's a break in our fight. It expresses the CCAT's determination to preserve life. We're keeping up the pressure through our presence at phase 2.5 on the ground, maintaining filtering traffic for all citizens."

- Roch Wamytan, President of the Congress of New Caledonia said "The context" is not favourable to "discussions with the President of the Republic", after the cancellation of the videoconference proposed to Caledonian elected representatives by Emmanuel Macron. "How can you discuss with the President of the Republic under these conditions?" he continued. "We accepted the principle of discussions, except that to be able to meet the President of the Republic and listen to what he had to say to us, it was normal to prepare in advance. For me, it wasn't possible to do that today."
- French Justice Minister Eric Dupond-Moretti has called on prosecutors to "take the strongest possible action against the perpetrators of the violence" and also indicated he was considering transferring the "criminals" to mainland France.
- French Home Affairs and Overseas minister Gérald Darmanin told public TV channel France 2 he had placed 10 leaders of the CCAT (an organisation linked with FLNKS) under home detention. "This is a Mafia-like body which I do not amalgamate with political pro-independence parties...[CCAT] is a group that claims itself to be pro-independence and commits looting, murders and violence." "I have numerous elements which show this is a Mafia-like, violent organisation that loots stores and shoots real bullets at (French) gendarmes, sets businesses on fire and attacks even pro-independence institutions." "Massive reinforcements were to arrive shortly and the French state would "totally regain control", he said.
- The National Council of Chiefs of the Indigenous Kanak condemned "all acts of vandalism and gun violence", but rejected the allegations that the pro-independence movement was involved in the deadly violence. Grand Chief Hippolyte Sinewami-Htamumu expressed full support for the pro-independence group, which has mobilised more than a hundred thousand people "of all ages and from all backgrounds" in peaceful protests in recent months in the capital, Nouméa, and throughout the island. "This is not a 'terrorist group' or 'mafia group', as certain political leaders want us to believe."
- Romuald Pidjo, from the CCAT's [a pro-independence political group] Kanak delegation in Paris, on the anger of young people in Nouméa's working-class neighbourhoods [where some of the worst violence has taken place]. "These are people who are very disadvantaged, people who have been left behind. And what do they see, all these people, every day? They see people who've come from mainland France, who have big cars. And they have nothing! The straw that broke the camel's back was this constitutional bill in which the state is going to say: 'We're going to continue to bring in people who are going to crush you, who are going to take everything in this country'."
- Leaders of a Kanak Workers Union in Paris appealed for calm and said they were deeply saddened by deaths in their faraway homeland. "We wish to see the French government make a strong political statement rather than send troops," union leader Rock Haocas told reporters. "Starting a conversation would be a strong political statement."
- Cook Islands Prime Minister Mark Brown [and outgoing PIF Chair] said greater autonomy for the indigenous Kanak population is needed. "If there's one thing that specific countries

value, it is the sovereignty and independence. To be able to have control over the destiny of your own country." "My initial view of the unrest that's occurring in Caledonia, it is cause to recognise greater autonomy and greater independence from the people on those islands. "As a member of the Forum now, we will be able to provide support assistance to these member countries as to the best way forward without trying to try to avoid any escalation of conflict."

- Henry Puna, outgoing secretary-general of the Pacific Islands Forum told journalists at his final news conference that "to see the collapse [and], protesting is very unfortunate", but it was predictable. He said the issue "has been boiling" since the 2021 independence referendum in the French territory, the third and final vote under the Nouméa Accord, which was boycotted by the pro-indigenous Kanak population. He said he was there in December 2021 to monitor the independence referendum when it was taken and "it was unfortunate that it was allowed to go ahead during that time". "We were in the middle of [the] Covid [pandemic] and the Kanak custom is that when somebody passes they mourn that for one year. So they weren't allowed that freedom. "As a result, they didn't want to take part in the referendum because they couldn't go against their tradition and go campaigning or do other work. That's disrespectful for the custom."
- Vanuatu's prime minister, Charlot Salwai (also chairman of the Melanesian Spearhead Group, which also includes Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands) said the indiscriminate destruction of property would affect New Caledonia's economy in a big way and have a cascading effect on the lives of all New Caledonians, including Kanaks. He said France should establish dialogue with FLNKS, which has condemned the violence, and annul the constitutional reform that sparked the crisis. "These events could have been avoided if the French government had listened."
- French High Commissioner in Noumea Louis Le Franc said in a televised news conference the protesters were causing a "dire situation" for medicine and food for the population. He said main and secondary roads in Noumea were blocked by barricades with burning cars and car carcasses, some with booby traps.
- Australia's foreign affairs minister, Penny Wong, said Australians were advised to reconsider their need to travel to New Caledonia due to "civil unrest, travel disruption and limited essential services". "Again I repeat and take this opportunity to repeat Australia's call for calm. We respect and support the referendum process ... and the discussions under way between all parties, and encourage all parties to work together cooperatively to shape the future of New Caledonia."
- Labour Party Deputy Leader Carmel Sepuloni said the growing unrest was a concern. At last year's Pacific Islands Forum, French Polynesian representatives were already expressing concern about how some policies from the French government might affect its indigenous population, she said.

**From:** [Noumea.Intel](#)  
**To:** [NOUMEA](#); [PACPE](#); [DCE](#); [...PACIFIC POSTS](#); [DS AAG](#); [DS EMA](#); [DS MLG](#); [AUS](#); [EUR](#); [ISED](#); [SORD Security](#); [CON](#); [PARIS](#); [FM.P/S MFA \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.P/S Associate MFA \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.Defence \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.DPMC \(FPA\) \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.Police \(Seemail\)](#); [s6\(a\)](#) [FM.Police \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.Customs Service \(Seemail\)](#); [PACMM](#); [PACREG](#); [PHM](#); [DEVPP](#); [DEVFCO](#); [...EUROPEAN POSTS](#)  
**Cc:** [Noumea.ResponseManager](#); [Noumea.Controller](#); [Noumea.MinLiaison](#); [Noumea.ConsularRM](#); [Noumea.AssistedDepartures](#); [Noumea.Logistics](#); [Noumea.Planning](#); [Noumea.Intel](#); [SCMU@dpmc.govt.nz](#); [fiona.dally@mbie.govt.nz](#); [chris.shaw@mbie.govt.nz](#); [mike.hill@caa.govt.nz](#); [Ben.king@dpmc.govt.nz](#); [...YEOMANS\\_Sally \(Inet\)](#); [...YEOMANS\\_Sally \(Inet\)](#); [Vanessa.berry@customs.govt.nz](#); [sean.bolton@dpmc.govt.nz](#); [Cherie.bliithe@dpmc.govt.nz](#); [c.vandermeulen@transport.govt.nz](#); [KANE, Jared \(PEP\)](#); [Chris.Scahill@TeWhatuOra.govt.nz](#); [Michael.inglis@mpi.govt.nz](#); [sarah.tuihalangingie@mpi.govt.nz](#); [zubair.ali@mpi.govt.nz](#); [Miguel.Navarro@mpi.govt.nz](#); [Julian.Grey@dpmc.govt.nz](#); [noc@mpi.govt.nz](#); [SUE.EDEN@nzdf.mil.nz](#); [David.Williams@nzdf.mil.nz](#); [Contact](#); [LAW\\_Anna \(PRD\)](#); [BARRINGTON\\_Svar \(PACREG\)](#); [PETERS\\_Sonya \(CMD\)](#); [FM.Immigration NZ \(Seemail\)](#); [kathleen.pearce@defence.govt.nz](#); [MODPacific@defence.govt.nz](#)  
**Subject:** FORMAL MESSAGE: SITREP 14: New Caledonia Unrest - Tuesday 21 May  
**Date:** Tuesday, 21 May 2024 10:56:40 am

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[RESTRICTED]

## Executive Summary SitRep 14: New Caledonia Unrest – Tuesday 21 May

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### **Key media messages**

- New Zealand is seriously concerned about the situation and violent protests in Noumea.
- The safety of New Zealanders in New Caledonia is an urgent priority for us.
- We are aware of around 295 New Zealanders in New Caledonia.
- New Zealanders are urged to keep their SafeTravel Registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their 'departure date' is updated.
- New Zealand is exploring possible options and working alongside Australia and other partners on their planning to help get New Zealanders in New Caledonia home.
- *[If C-130 has departed]* A New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) C-130 will head to New Caledonia today (Tuesday 21 May) to begin bringing home New Zealanders who have been grounded in the country since violent protests erupted there last week.
- *[If the C-130 has not departed]* New Zealand stands ready to bring New Zealanders in New Caledonia home on NZDF flights as soon as French authorities give permission for these flights to proceed.
- New Zealand and Australian Foreign Ministers held a joint call with the French Foreign Minister Stephane Sejourne last night (Monday 20 May) to reiterate our requests to allow repatriation flights to commence as soon as possible, <sup>s6(a)</sup>

s6(b)(i)

s6(a), s6(b)(i)

- *[If asked about the specifics of the potential NZDF deployment]:* We are not able to share details on specific options at this stage.
- *[If asked about transport on the ground/road access to airports, etc.]:* We continue to work with relevant authorities on the ground to understand security and access issues, including for travel to airports in Noumea.

s9(2)(g)(i)

### *Assisted Departures*

- Officials continue to explore options for assisted departure in close collaboration with Australia. NZDF remain ready to deploy from Whenuapai this morning (Tuesday 21 May), contingent on approval from French Authorities.
- The C-130 is on standby at Whenuapai ready for take-off if/when approval is granted. This posture can be maintained up to 12:30pm today (Tuesday 21 May). If the flight takes off this morning, it will arrive in Noumea 1:40pm local time and depart Noumea at 3:40pm arriving back at Auckland International Airport 8:20pm. This flight would repatriate 46. Planning continues for subsequent flights.
- s6(a)

### *In Noumea*

- The death toll from the unrest currently sits at six people.
- President Macron convened a third national security and defence council meeting in the early hours this morning (Tuesday 21 May NZ time). The council announced that Tontouta Airport will remain closed until Thursday 23 May and more military personnel will be sent in to protect government buildings.
- President Macron noted clear progress in restoring order and that “All measures are being taken to enable tourists still present in the archipelago to return home”. French officials have advised they wish to start moving foreign nationals out of New Caledonia today (Tuesday 21 May).
- While the situation appears to be stabilising, violence and clashes with security forces continue. Damage assessments estimate the cost at around XPF 40 billion (approximately NZ\$590 million). An estimated 2,000 jobs have also been impacted.

### *New Zealand's response*

- Following the trilateral call between Minister Peters and the Foreign Ministers of France and Australia last night (Monday 20 May), both [MFA](#) and [Senator Wong](#) posted on twitter/X reiterating the request for access for repatriation flights.
- Ministers Peters and Wong sent a letter to the French Ministers of Foreign Affairs and the Interior ahead of the trilateral call via the French Embassy in Wellington. The letter urges the French Government to urgently facilitate assisted departure flights for New Zealanders, Australians and other nationals out of New Caledonia.
- s6(a)  
Should the French Ministers agree to an assisted departure, officials will move quickly to arrange a flight for Tuesday 21 May.
- s6(a)

- Letters from MFA to the French High Commissioner in New Caledonia and the President of the Government of New Caledonia have been dispatched.



## Consular response

- We are aware of around 295 New Zealanders in New Caledonia. New Zealanders in New Caledonia are urged to register on SafeTravel and keep their registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their 'departure date' is updated.
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia should stay in place and avoid all protests, monitor local media for developments, and comply with any instructions and restrictions issued by local authorities.
- Post and Consular Call Centre staff continue to conduct welfare checks on Kiwis in New Caledonia. Since the unrest erupted, Ministry officials have met with over 100 Kiwis at hotels to discuss updates and answer questions, and will continue to do so.
- New Zealand's current travel alert level for all of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential travel** (Level 3 of 4). This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.

## ANNEX: Full SitRep 14: New Caledonia Unrest – Tuesday 21 May

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### Key media messages

#### *Political situation*

- New Zealand is seriously concerned about the situation and violent protests in Noumea.
- The safety of New Zealanders in New Caledonia is an urgent priority for us.
- We are aware of around 295 New Zealanders in New Caledonia.
- New Zealanders are urged to keep their SafeTravel Registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their 'departure date' is updated.
- New Zealand stands ready to bring New Zealanders in New Caledonia home on NZDF flights as soon as French authorities give permission for these flights to proceed.
- New Zealand is exploring possible options and working alongside Australia and other partners on their planning to help get New Zealanders in New Caledonia home.
- *[If C-130 has departed]* A New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) C-130 will head to New Caledonia today (Tuesday 21 May) to begin bringing home New Zealanders who have been grounded in the country since violent protests erupted there last week.
- *[If the C-130 has not departed]* New Zealand stands ready to bring New Zealanders in New Caledonia home on NZDF flights as soon as French authorities give permission for these flights to proceed.
- New Zealand and Australian Foreign Ministers held a joint call with the French Foreign Minister Stephane Sejourne last night (Monday 20 May) to reiterate our requests to allow repatriation flights to commence as soon as possible, <sup>s6(a)</sup>
- s6(b)(i)

s6(a), s6(b)(i)

- *[If asked about transport on the ground/road access to airports, etc.]:* We continue to work with relevant authorities on the ground to understand security and access issues, including for travel to airports in Noumea.
- *[If raised: independence of New Caledonia]* The question of independence is one for the people of New Caledonia to decide with France. We acknowledge that the political and

economic situation in New Caledonia is challenging and reiterate calls on all Parties to find a solution. We hope that peace and calm will prevail.

- s6(a) The immediate priority must be for all sides to take steps to de-escalate the situation, so that there can be dialogue and calm. No matter your views on the political arrangements in New Caledonia, everyone should agree that violence is harmful to every community there.
- *[If asked about assisted departures]* New Zealand authorities have now completed preparations for NZDF flights to bring New Zealanders in New Caledonia home while commercial flights are not operating. We await approval from French authorities as to when these flights are safe to proceed.
- *[If raised: PIF Members and Secretariat comments on crisis]* The Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) is the region's pre-eminent political entity and it is understandable that Forum Members and the PIF Secretariat are following developments in New Caledonia closely. We recognise and share the concern felt among Forum Members at the recent violence. We engage in a consistent manner with all Forum Members, including New Caledonia, on PIF matters and put high value on the centrality and unity of the PIF. It is for individual countries to make their own assessments on the situation in New Caledonia. New Zealand has been very clear on the need for all sides to take steps to de-escalate, so that there can be dialogue and calm.
- s6(a)

#### *Consular response*

- We are aware of around 295 New Zealanders in New Caledonia.
- New Zealanders are urged to keep their SafeTravel Registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their 'departure date' is updated.
- New Zealanders in need of immediate consular assistance should contact the 24/7 Consular Emergency line on +64 99 20 20 20.
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia should stay in place and avoid all protests, monitor local media for developments, and comply with any instructions and restrictions issued by local authorities.
- Post and Consular Call Centre staff continue to conduct welfare checks on Kiwis in New Caledonia. Since the unrest erupted, Ministry officials in Noumea have met with over 100 Kiwis at hotels to discuss updates and answer questions.
- Officials are regularly speaking with New Caledonian authorities regarding airport operations and access, and ongoing needs in relation to critical supplies such as food and medicine.
- At present, with the Tontouta international airport remaining closed, there is no safe way to leave New Caledonia.
- New Zealand's current travel alert level for all of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential travel** (Level 3 of 4). This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.
- We recommend that all travellers check with their airline for any updates on flight bookings. Travellers should also contact their travel insurance provider if travel has been disrupted.
- *[If asked about assisted departures]* New Zealand stands ready to bring New Zealanders in New Caledonia home on NZDF flights as soon as French authorities give permission for

these flights to proceed.

- *[If asked why the Consulate in Noumea is closed]* Due to the State of Emergency in New Caledonia, and the security requirement to stay home/in place, Consulate staff are working remotely. Callers to the Consulate are being directed to New Zealand's 24/7 Consular Emergency line.

## Latest developments

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### **Key developments**

#### *Assisted Departures*

- Officials continue to explore options for assisted departure in close collaboration with Australia. NZDF remain ready to deploy from Whenuapai this morning (Tuesday 21 May), contingent on approval from French Authorities.
- The C-130 is on standby at Whenuapai ready for take-off if/when approval is granted. This posture can be maintained up to 12:30pm today (Tuesday 21 May). If the flight takes off this morning, it will arrive in Noumea 1:40pm local time and depart Noumea at 3:40pm arriving back at Auckland International Airport 8:20pm. This flight would repatriate 46. Planning continues for subsequent flights.
- s6(a)
- Following the trilateral call with Minister Peters and the Foreign Ministers of France and Australia last night [Monday 20 May], both [MFA](#) and [Senator Wong](#) posted on twitter/X reiterating the request for access for repatriation flights.
- Ministers Peters and Wong sent a letter to the French Ministers of Foreign Affairs and the Interior ahead of the trilateral call via the French Embassy in Wellington. The letter urges the French Government to urgently facilitate assisted departure flights for New Zealanders, Australians and other nationals out of New Caledonia.

#### *In Noumea*

- One person has been killed and two more injured in an exchange of gunfire on Saturday 18 May as they tried to pass a barricade near Kaala-Gomen. This brings the death toll to six, including 2 gendarmes and 3 Kanak. A body was also found in Noumea harbour – the circumstances of this death are not yet clear and may be unrelated.
- President Macron convened a third national security and defence council meeting in te early hours this morning (Tuesday 21 May NZ time). The council announced that Tontouta Airport will remain closed until Thursday 23 May and more military personnel will be sent in to protect government buildings.
- President Macron noted clear progress in restoring order and that “All measures are being taken to enable tourists still present in the archipelago to return home”. French officials have advised they wish to start moving foreign nationals out of New Caledonia today (Tuesday 21 May).
- The French High Commissioner statement last night included that “Republican order here will be re-established whatever the cost”. He said that the authorities had regained control of the road between Noumea and the International Airport. Around 60 roadblocks had been dismantled, but the clean-up and repair operation would last several days. Due to this, the authorities assess that the road will not be useable until the weekend (i.e.

Saturday 25 May) at the earliest.

- The High Commissioner also called on those with weapons to hand them in and warned of the potential consequences should they be used against trained French security forces.
- While the situation appears to be stabilising, violence and clashes with security forces continue. Revised damage assessments estimate the cost at around XPF 40 billion (approximately NZ\$590 million). An estimated 2,000 jobs have also been impacted.
- The Ministry **has organised transportation to** support movement of people from hotels to airports. <sup>s6(a)</sup>  
This will likely be needed for assisted departure flights or when commercial options reopen.
- There are still outer suburbs of Noumea that remain largely inaccessible, including by police forces who are generally the target of the violence. A “demining” exercise would need to be carried out before the safety of the roads could be guaranteed.
- The 6pm to 6am curfew will remain in force for the full duration of the state of emergency. This curfew covers the entire territory of New Caledonia. The local government has announced that schools will be closed next week.
- French reinforcements were focused on restoring freedom of movement by removing barricades and hazards; restocking supermarkets and pharmacies, and ensuring the efficient movement of supplies around New Caledonia; and supporting the function of health services, ensuring access was available to those in need.
- French officials confirmed last night that New Caledonia has sufficient provisions of food and medicine, including additional supplies that have arrived in the port. Ministry officials have confirmed that supermarkets are being restocked with some food items.
- 20 shops have reopened and the New Caledonian Government have said many of the shops will be restocked Monday 20 May.

#### *New Zealand's response*

- <sup>s6(a)</sup>
- Speaking from Italy Monday 20 May NZT to *Morning Report*, Defence Minister Collins reaffirmed that NZDF stands ready to begin the assisted departures process for New Zealanders in New Caledonia as soon as French authorities give permission to do so.
- MFA's tweet/X Sunday 19 May confirmed preparations are complete for NZDF flights to bring New Zealanders in New Caledonia home while commercial flights are not operating. The Minister also indicated those flights cannot proceed until we have approval from French authorities. The tweet/X was timed to complement Australian Foreign Minister Wong's tweet/X of similar nature.
- — Minister Peters' comments about the possibility of an NZDF plane assisting with departures from New Caledonia are being widely reported in the [NZ Herald](#) [Saturday 18 May], and [RNZ](#) and [Newshub](#) [Friday 17 May].
- While in Vanuatu, the Minister addressed the situation in a press conference. [View here](#).
- The Minister of Foreign Affairs issued a press release on 16 May on the situation in New Caledonia: “NZ calls for calm, constructive dialogue in New Caledonia”. [Read here](#).

- s6(a)
- MFA spoke with Pacific Islands Forum Chair Prime Minister Mark Brown at 3:30pm Saturday 18 May. The discussion included New Zealand's desire to work with Pacific partners to help calm the situation down, and the role of the PIF to facilitate dialogue and promote de-escalation in the region. Officials are also exploring calls for MFA with the Prime Ministers of Fiji and Tonga.
- Officials have been advised of a protest planned outside the Embassy of France at 12pm Wednesday 22 May. This is being organised by Peace Action Wellington via social media, rallied by pro-Palestine groups and is intended to be in solidarity with the Kanak people in New Caledonia. A police presence is being organised for additional security around the Embassy. MFAT is in touch with police and French officials.

#### *Consular*

- We are aware of around 295 New Zealanders in New Caledonia. New Zealanders are urged to keep their SafeTravel Registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their 'departure date' is updated.
- MFAT has upgraded SafeTravel alert level to Level 3 (out of 4) for the whole of New Caledonia **"Avoid non-essential travel"** in New Caledonia due to ongoing civil unrest.
- Post and Consular Call Centre staff continue to conduct welfare checks on Kiwis in New Caledonia. Since the unrest erupted, Ministry officials have met with over 100 Kiwis at hotels to discuss updates and answer questions. A Ministry official and a representative of Air New Zealand have met with Kiwis at two Noumea hotels. Approximately 60 people were present.
- s9(2)(ba)(i)

#### *Diplomatic outreach*

- New Zealand has formal consular obligations to Switzerland, Netherlands, and Samoa.  
s6(a)
- s6(a)
- s6(a), s6(b)(i)
- s6(a), s6(b)(i)

#### *Staff welfare*

- MFAT staff in Noumea are all reported safe and well. MFAT head office is in regular contact and has prepared to deploy two additional staff to provide surge assistance in the coming days (should air travel allow).
- s9(2)(a)

### Contacts

- The MFAT Emergency Coordination Centre will operate from 8am-7pm daily and through the weekend. Please direct emails to:
  - Incident controller [Noumea.Controller@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.Controller@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Response manager [Noumea.ResponseManager@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.ResponseManager@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Consular response manager [Noumea.ConsularRM@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.ConsularRM@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Intel [Noumea.Intel@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.Intel@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Ministerial liaison [Noumea.MinLiaison@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.MinLiaison@mfat.govt.nz)

### Media comments by other Leaders

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- [President Emmanuel Macron](#) "noted clear progress in restoring order" following his convening of the third national security and defence council meeting overnight (Tuesday 21 May).
- [New Caledonian representative in the French National Assembly Nicolas Metzdorf](#)<sup>s6(a)</sup> returned to New Caledonia last night on board a French military plane. In a radio interview on Monday 20 May, Metzdorf labelled the CCAT a "terrorist organisation" and also criticised the state for not being prepared for the current situation. Metzdorf also stated his view that the legislative process to open the electoral roll had to continue; if not it would be giving in to the CCAT, and would mean that their actions had been successful.
- [President Macron](#) strongly condemned the "inacceptable violence, destruction, intimidation and assaults against persons, property and law enforcement agents" that has taken place in New Caledonia for the past three days. Macron has sent an invitation by way of a letter, to New Caledonia's politicians, for a meeting in Paris.
- [French Prime Minister Gabriel Attal](#), "Everything is being done to restore order and calm that Caledonians deserve," after a meeting at the presidential palace on Wednesday. He said the situation "remains very tense, with looting, riots, arson and attacks, which are unbearable and unspeakable". Speaking before the National Assembly on Tuesday, underlined the opportunity for those talks to resume and called on New Caledonia's parties to "seize the opportunity of this extended hand" to resume dialogue. "Only dialogue will allow us to appease tensions. Our hand remains extended. We need an inclusive political solution that can satisfy all stakeholders and that's why we are offering New Caledonian leaders to discuss and build together the future of New Caledonia", he told Parliament during question time.
- [On Friday CCAT \(an independence political party\) issued a statement](#) calling for "a time of calm to break the spiral of violence". The CCAT issued a new communiqué at midday on Friday. "In the face of the State's stubborn determination to impose constitutional change, we denounce the State's irresponsibility and hold it responsible for the loss of human life, the atrocities and the devastation of the country's economic fabric." The CCAT says it is deeply affected by the loss of these lives, "those of our young people murdered by militias backed by the State and non-independence leaders, and that of the young gendarme". In this press release, the cell coordinating field actions calls for appeasement. "A time for

appeasement to halt the escalation of violence.” He added: “It's a break in our fight. It expresses the CCAT's determination to preserve life. We're keeping up the pressure through our presence at phase 2.5 on the ground, maintaining filtering traffic for all citizens.”

- Roch Wamytan, President of the Congress of New Caledonia said “The context” is not favourable to “discussions with the President of the Republic”, after the cancellation of the videoconference proposed to Caledonian elected representatives by Emmanuel Macron. “How can you discuss with the President of the Republic under these conditions?” he continued. “We accepted the principle of discussions, except that to be able to meet the President of the Republic and listen to what he had to say to us, it was normal to prepare in advance. For me, it wasn't possible to do that today.”
- French Justice Minister Eric Dupond-Moretti has called on prosecutors to "take the strongest possible action against the perpetrators of the violence" and also indicated he was considering transferring the "criminals" to mainland France.
- French Home Affairs and Overseas minister Gérald Darmanin told public TV channel France 2 he had placed 10 leaders of the CCAT (an organisation linked with FLNKS) under home detention. "This is a Mafia-like body which I do not amalgamate with political pro-independence parties...[CCAT] is a group that claims itself to be pro-independence and commits looting, murders and violence," "I have numerous elements which show this is a Mafia-like, violent organisation that loots stores and shoots real bullets at (French) gendarmes, sets businesses on fire and attacks even pro-independence institutions." "Massive reinforcements were to arrive shortly and the French state would "totally regain control", he said.
- The National Council of Chiefs of the Indigenous Kanak condemned "all acts of vandalism and gun violence", but rejected the allegations that the pro-independence movement was involved in the deadly violence. Grand Chief Hippolyte Sinewami-Htamumu expressed full support for the pro-independence group, which has mobilised more than a hundred thousand people "of all ages and from all backgrounds" in peaceful protests in recent months in the capital, Nouméa, and throughout the island. "This is not a 'terrorist group' or 'mafia group', as certain political leaders want us to believe."
- Romuald Pidjo, from the CCAT's [a pro-independence political group] Kanak delegation in Paris, on the anger of young people in Nouméa's working-class neighbourhoods [where some of the worst violence has taken place]. “These are people who are very disadvantaged, people who have been left behind. And what do they see, all these people, every day? They see people who've come from mainland France, who have big cars. And they have nothing! The straw that broke the camel's back was this constitutional bill in which the state is going to say: 'We're going to continue to bring in people who are going to crush you, who are going to take everything in this country'.”
- Leaders of a Kanak Workers Union in Paris appealed for calm and said they were deeply saddened by deaths in their faraway homeland. "We wish to see the French government make a strong political statement rather than send troops," union leader Rock Haocas told reporters. "Starting a conversation would be a strong political statement."
- Cook Islands Prime Minister Mark Brown [and outgoing PIF Chair] said greater autonomy for the indigenous Kanak population is needed. "If there's one thing that specific countries value, it is the sovereignty and independence. To be able to have control over the destiny of your own country.” “My initial view of the unrest that's occurring in Caledonia, it is cause to recognise greater autonomy and greater independence from the people on those islands. "As a member of the Forum now, we will be able to provide support assistance to these member countries as to the best way forward without trying to try to avoid any escalation of conflict."

- Henry Puna, outgoing secretary-general of the Pacific Islands Forum told journalists at his final news conference that "to see the collapse [and], protesting is very unfortunate", but it was predictable. He said the issue "has been boiling" since the 2021 independence referendum in the French territory, the third and final vote under the Nouméa Accord, which was boycotted by the pro-indigenous Kanak population. He said he was there in December 2021 to monitor the independence referendum when it was taken and "it was unfortunate that it was allowed to go ahead during that time". "We were in the middle of [the] Covid [pandemic] and the Kanak custom is that when somebody passes they mourn that for one year. So they weren't allowed that freedom. "As a result, they didn't want to take part in the referendum because they couldn't go against their tradition and go campaigning or do other work. That's disrespectful for the custom."
- Vanuatu's prime minister, Charlot Salwai (also chairman of the Melanesian Spearhead Group, which also includes Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands) said the indiscriminate destruction of property would affect New Caledonia's economy in a big way and have a cascading effect on the lives of all New Caledonians, including Kanaks. He said France should establish dialogue with FLNKS, which has condemned the violence, and annul the constitutional reform that sparked the crisis. "These events could have been avoided if the French government had listened."
- French High Commissioner in Noumea Louis Le Franc said in a televised news conference the protesters were causing a "dire situation" for medicine and food for the population. He said main and secondary roads in Noumea were blocked by barricades with burning cars and car carcasses, some with booby traps.
- Australia's foreign affairs minister, Penny Wong, said Australians were advised to reconsider their need to travel to New Caledonia due to "civil unrest, travel disruption and limited essential services". "Again I repeat and take this opportunity to repeat Australia's call for calm. We respect and support the referendum process ... and the discussions under way between all parties, and encourage all parties to work together cooperatively to shape the future of New Caledonia."
- Labour Party Deputy Leader Carmel Sepuloni said the growing unrest was a concern. At last year's Pacific Islands Forum, French Polynesian representatives were already expressing concern about how some policies from the French government might affect its indigenous population, she said.

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**Subject:** FORMAL MESSAGE: SitRep 15: New Caledonia Unrest - Tuesday 21 May  
**Date:** Tuesday, 21 May 2024 7:30:00 pm

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## Executive Summary SitRep 15: New Caledonia Unrest – Tuesday 21 May

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### **Key media messages**

- New Zealand is seriously concerned about the situation and violent protests in Noumea.
- The safety of New Zealanders in New Caledonia is an urgent priority for us. We are aware of around 300 New Zealanders in New Caledonia.
- A New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) C-130 [has taken off from](#) New Caledonia today at 6.45pm (Tuesday 21 May) to begin bringing home New Zealanders who have been grounded in the country since violent protests erupted there last week.
- Today's flight will carry around 45 passengers with the most pressing needs from Nouméa to Auckland. Passengers for subsequent flights will be prioritised by consular staff.
- We are working hard with France and Australia to ensure that further assisted departure flights can operate in the coming days.
- We have asked those registered with us on SafeTravel to let us know if they wish to express their interest in any potential further flight options, following the first flight out today.
- *[If asked about other foreign nationals on the NZDF flight]:* A small number of seats were also offered to other nationals with urgent needs.
- *[If asked about the specifics of the potential NZDF deployment]:* We are not able to share details on specific options at this stage.

s9(2)(g)(i)

### *Assisted Departures*

- French Authorities granted approval for a NZDF plane to repatriate New Zealanders today (Tuesday 21 May). MFA posted on twitter/X following confirmation of the flight.
- The C-130 departed from Whenuapai this afternoon (Tuesday 21 May) and landed at Magenta Domestic Airport, Noumea. The return flight is expected to arrive back at Auckland International Airport 10:00pm. This flight will repatriate 48 people. Planning continues for subsequent flights.
- s6(a), s6(b)(i)
- A New Zealand Immigration Liaison Officer from MBIE has travelled up to Noumea on today's flight and will remain in-country to manage immigration screening throughout the duration of the response.

### *In Noumea*

- The death toll from the unrest currently sits at six people.
- President Macron convened a third national security and defence council meeting in the early hours this morning (Tuesday 21 May NZ time). The council announced that Tontouta

Airport will remain closed until Thursday 23 May and more military personnel will be sent in to protect government buildings.

- President Macron noted clear progress in restoring order and that “All measures are being taken to enable tourists still present in the archipelago to return home”. French officials have advised they wish to start moving foreign nationals out of New Caledonia today (Tuesday 21 May).
- While the situation appears to be stabilising, violence and clashes with security forces continue. Damage assessments estimate the cost at around XPF 40 billion (approximately NZ\$590 million). An estimated 2,000 jobs have also been impacted.

#### *New Zealand’s response*

- Minister Peters has put out a press release, and [posted on twitter/X](#), confirming the New Zealand Government plane will head to New Caledonia.
- Minister Peters also spoke with [Checkpoint](#) and [Newstalk ZB](#) this evening [Tuesday 21 May].
- Following a trilateral call between Minister Peters and the Foreign Ministers of France and Australia last night (Monday 20 May), both [MFA](#) and [Senator Wong](#) posted on twitter/X reiterating the request for access for repatriation flights.
- s6(a)  
Should the French Ministers agree to a further assisted departure, officials will move quickly to arrange a flight for Wednesday 22 May.
- s6(a)
- Letters from MFA to the French High Commissioner in New Caledonia and the President of the Government of New Caledonia have been dispatched.

#### **Consular response**

- We are aware of around 300 New Zealanders in New Caledonia. New Zealanders in New Caledonia are urged to register on SafeTravel and keep their registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their ‘departure date’ is updated.
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia should stay in place and avoid all protests, monitor local media for developments, and comply with any instructions and restrictions issued by local authorities.
- Post and Consular Call Centre staff continue to conduct welfare checks on Kiwis in New Caledonia. Since the unrest erupted, Ministry officials have met with over 100 Kiwis at hotels to discuss updates and answer questions, and will continue to do so.
- New Zealand’s current travel alert level for all of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential travel** (Level 3 of 4). This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.

## Key media messages

### *Political situation*

- New Zealand is seriously concerned about the situation and violent protests in Noumea.
- The safety of New Zealanders in New Caledonia is an urgent priority for us. **We are aware of around 300 New Zealanders in New Caledonia.**
- **A New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) C-130 has departed from New Caledonia today at 6.45 pm (Tuesday 21 May) to begin bringing home New Zealanders who have been grounded in the country since violent protests erupted there last week.**
- **Today's flight will carry around 45 passengers with the most pressing needs from Nouméa to Auckland. Passengers for subsequent flights will be prioritised by consular staff.**
- **We are working hard with France and Australia to ensure that further flights can operate in the coming days.**
- ***[If asked about other foreign nationals on the NZDF flight]:* A small number of seats were also offered to other nationals with urgent needs.**
- **We have asked those registered with us on SafeTravel to let us know if they wish to express their interest in any potential further flight options, following the first flight out today.**
- **New Zealand and Australian Foreign Ministers held a joint call with the French Foreign Minister Stephane Sejourne last night (Monday 20 May). s6(a), s6(b)(i)**
- ***[If asked about transport on the ground/road access to airports, etc.]:* We continue to work with relevant authorities on the ground to understand security and access issues, including for travel to airports in Noumea.**
- ***[If raised: independence of New Caledonia]* The question of independence is one for the people of New Caledonia to decide with France. We acknowledge that the political and economic situation in New Caledonia is challenging and reiterate calls on all Parties to find a solution. We hope that peace and calm will prevail.**
- **s6(a) The immediate priority must be for all sides to take steps to de-escalate the situation, so that there can be dialogue and calm. No matter your views on the political arrangements in New Caledonia, everyone should agree that violence is harmful to every community there.**
- ***[If raised: PIF Members and Secretariat comments on crisis]* The Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) is the region's pre-eminent political entity and it is understandable that Forum Members and the PIF Secretariat are following developments in New Caledonia closely. We recognise and share the concern felt among Forum Members at the recent violence. We engage in a consistent manner with all Forum Members, including New Caledonia, on PIF matters and put high value on the centrality and unity of the PIF. It is for individual countries to make their own assessments on the situation in New Caledonia. New Zealand has been very clear on the need for all sides to take steps to de-escalate, so that there can be dialogue and calm.**
- **s6(a)**

### *Consular response*

- We are aware of around **300** New Zealanders in New Caledonia.

- New Zealanders are urged to keep their SafeTravel Registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their 'departure date' is updated.
- New Zealanders in need of immediate consular assistance should contact the 24/7 Consular Emergency line on +64 99 20 20 20.
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia should stay in place and avoid all protests, monitor local media for developments, and comply with any instructions and restrictions issued by local authorities.
- Post and Consular Call Centre staff continue to conduct welfare checks on Kiwis in New Caledonia. Since the unrest erupted, Ministry officials in Noumea have met with over 100 Kiwis at hotels to discuss updates and answer questions.
- Officials are regularly speaking with New Caledonian authorities regarding airport operations and access, and ongoing needs in relation to critical supplies such as food and medicine.
- At present, with the Tontouta international airport remaining closed, there is no safe way to leave New Caledonia.
- New Zealand's current travel alert level for all of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential travel** (Level 3 of 4). This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.
- We recommend that all travellers check with their airline for any updates on flight bookings. Travellers should also contact their travel insurance provider if travel has been disrupted.
- *[If asked about assisted departures]* New Zealand stands ready to bring New Zealanders in New Caledonia home on NZDF flights as soon as French authorities give permission for these flights to proceed.
- *[If asked why the Consulate in Noumea is closed]* Due to the State of Emergency in New Caledonia, and the security requirement to stay home/in place, Consulate staff are working remotely. Callers to the Consulate are being directed to New Zealand's 24/7 Consular Emergency line.

## Latest developments

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### **Key developments**

#### *Assisted Departures*

- French Authorities granted approval for an NZDF plane to repatriate New Zealanders today (Tuesday 21 May). MFA posted on [twitter/X](#) following confirmation of the flight and issued a [press release](#).
- Minister Peters also spoke with [Checkpoint](#) and [Newstalk ZB](#) this evening [Tuesday 21 May].
- The C-130 departed from Whenuapai this afternoon (Tuesday 21 May) and landed at Magenta Domestic Airport, in Noumea. The return flight is expected to arrive back at Auckland International Airport 10:00pm and will repatriate 48. Planning continues for subsequent flights.
- In parallel, the French have approved the assisted departure of Australian nationals via two Australian C 130 flights due in Magenta today (Tuesday 21 May). [Australia's Senator Wong](#) also posted to confirm the Australian flights.

- s6(a), s6(b)(i)
- s6(a)
- Following the trilateral call with Minister Peters and the Foreign Ministers of France and Australia last night [Monday 20 May], both [MFA](#) and [Senator Wong](#) posted on twitter/X reiterating the request for access for repatriation flights.

#### *In Noumea*

- One person has been killed and two more injured in an exchange of gunfire on Saturday 18 May as they tried to pass a barricade near Kaala-Gomen. This brings the death toll to six, including 2 gendarmes and 3 Kanak. A body was also found in Noumea harbour – the circumstances of this death are not yet clear and may be unrelated.
- President Macron convened a third national security and defence council meeting in the early hours this morning (Tuesday 21 May NZ time). The council announced that Tontouta Airport will remain closed until Thursday 23 May and more military personnel will be sent in to protect government buildings.
- President Macron noted clear progress in restoring order and that “All measures are being taken to enable tourists still present in the archipelago to return home”. s6(b)(i)
- The French High Commissioner statement last night included that “Republican order here will be re-established whatever the cost”. He said that the authorities had regained control of the road between Noumea and the International Airport. Around 60 roadblocks had been dismantled, but the clean-up and repair operation would last several days. Due to this, the authorities assess that the road will not be useable until the weekend (i.e. Saturday 25 May) at the earliest.
- The High Commissioner also called on those with weapons to hand them in and warned of the potential consequences should they be used against trained French security forces.
- While the situation appears to be stabilising, violence and clashes with security forces continue. Revised damage assessments estimate the cost at around XPF 40 billion (approximately NZ\$590 million). An estimated 2,000 jobs have also been impacted.
- The Ministry has organised transportation to support movement of people from hotels to airports. s6(a)  
This will likely be needed for assisted departure flights or when commercial options reopen.
- There are still outer suburbs of Noumea that remain largely inaccessible, including by police forces who are generally the target of the violence. A “demining” exercise would need to be carried out before the safety of the roads could be guaranteed.
- The 6pm to 6am curfew will remain in force for the full duration of the state of emergency. This curfew covers the entire territory of New Caledonia. The local government has announced that schools will be closed next week.
- French reinforcements were focused on restoring freedom of movement by removing barricades and hazards; restocking supermarkets and pharmacies, and ensuring the efficient movement of supplies around New Caledonia; and supporting the function of health services, ensuring access was available to those in need.

- French officials confirmed last night that New Caledonia has sufficient provisions of food and medicine, including additional supplies that have arrived in the port. Ministry officials have confirmed that supermarkets are being restocked with some food items.
- 20 shops have reopened and the New Caledonian Government have said many of the shops will be restocked Monday 20 May.

#### *New Zealand's response*

- Minister Peters has put out a [press release](#), and [posted on twitter/X](#), confirming the New Zealand Government plane will head to New Caledonia.
- 48 New Zealanders are being repatriated to Auckland via the NZDF C-130 flight today (Tuesday 21 May). Officials continue to work with French authorities regarding subsequent flights.
- A New Zealand Immigration Liaison Officer has been deployed to Noumea on the first repatriation flight and will remain in country to manage immigration screening requirements across the duration of the response.
- s6(a)
- s6(a)
- MFA spoke with Pacific Islands Forum Chair Prime Minister Mark Brown at 3:30pm Saturday 18 May. The discussion included New Zealand's desire to work with Pacific partners to help calm the situation down, and the role of the PIF to facilitate dialogue and promote de-escalation in the region. Officials are also exploring calls for MFA with the Prime Ministers of Fiji and Tonga.
- Officials have been advised of a protest planned outside the Embassy of France at 12pm Wednesday 22 May. This is being organised by Peace Action Wellington via social media, rallied by pro-Palestine groups and is intended to be in solidarity with the Kanak people in New Caledonia. A police presence is being organised for additional security around the Embassy. MFAT is in touch with police and French officials.

#### *Consular*

- We are aware of around 300 New Zealanders in New Caledonia. New Zealanders are urged to keep their SafeTravel Registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their 'departure date' is updated.
- MFAT has upgraded SafeTravel alert level to Level 3 (out of 4) for the whole of New Caledonia "**Avoid non-essential travel**" in New Caledonia due to ongoing civil unrest.
- Post and Consular Call Centre staff continue to conduct welfare checks on Kiwis in New

Caledonia. Since the unrest erupted, Ministry officials have met with over 100 Kiwis at hotels to discuss updates and answer questions. A Ministry official and a representative of Air New Zealand have met with Kiwis at two Noumea hotels. Approximately 60 people were present.

- s9(2)(ba)(i)

#### *Diplomatic outreach*

- New Zealand has formal consular obligations to Switzerland, Netherlands, and Samoa.  
s6(a)
- s6(a)
- s6(a), s6(b)(i)
- s6(a), s6(b)(i)

#### *Staff welfare*

- MFAT staff in Noumea are all reported safe and well. MFAT head office is in regular contact and has prepared to deploy two additional staff to provide surge assistance in the coming days (should air travel allow).
- s9(2)(a)

#### *Contacts*

- The MFAT Emergency Coordination Centre will operate from 8am-7pm daily and through the weekend. Please direct emails to:
  - Incident controller [Noumea.Controller@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.Controller@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Response manager [Noumea.ResponseManager@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.ResponseManager@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Consular response manager [Noumea.ConsularRM@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.ConsularRM@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Intel [Noumea.Intel@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.Intel@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Ministerial liaison [Noumea.MinLiaison@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.MinLiaison@mfat.govt.nz)

#### *Media comments by other Leaders*

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- President Emmanuel Macron “noted clear progress in restoring order” following his convening of the third national security and defence council meeting overnight (Tuesday 21 May).
- New Caledonian representative in the French National Assembly Nicolas Metzdorf s6(a)

s6(a)

returned to New Caledonia last night on board a French military plane. In a radio interview on Monday 20 May, Metzdorf labelled the CCAT a "terrorist organisation" and also criticised the state for not being prepared for the current situation. Metzdorf also stated his view that the legislative process to open the electoral roll had to continue; if not it would be giving in to the CCAT, and would mean that their actions had been successful.

- President Macron strongly condemned the "inacceptable violence, destruction, intimidation and assaults against persons, property and law enforcement agents" that has taken place in New Caledonia for the past three days. Macron has sent an invitation by way of a letter, to New Caledonia's politicians, for a meeting in Paris.
- French Prime Minister Gabriel Attal, "Everything is being done to restore order and calm that Caledonians deserve," after a meeting at the presidential palace on Wednesday. He said the situation "remains very tense, with looting, riots, arson and attacks, which are unbearable and unspeakable". Speaking before the National Assembly on Tuesday, underlined the opportunity for those talks to resume and called on New Caledonia's parties to "seize the opportunity of this extended hand" to resume dialogue. "Only dialogue will allow us to appease tensions. Our hand remains extended. We need an inclusive political solution that can satisfy all stakeholders and that's why we are offering New Caledonian leaders to discuss and build together the future of New Caledonia", he told Parliament during question time.
- On Friday CCAT (an independence political party) issued a statement calling for "a time of calm to break the spiral of violence". The CCAT issued a new communiqué at midday on Friday. "In the face of the State's stubborn determination to impose constitutional change, we denounce the State's irresponsibility and hold it responsible for the loss of human life, the atrocities and the devastation of the country's economic fabric." The CCAT says it is deeply affected by the loss of these lives, "those of our young people murdered by militias backed by the State and non-independence leaders, and that of the young gendarme". In this press release, the cell coordinating field actions calls for appeasement. "A time for appeasement to halt the escalation of violence." He added: "It's a break in our fight. It expresses the CCAT's determination to preserve life. We're keeping up the pressure through our presence at phase 2.5 on the ground, maintaining filtering traffic for all citizens."
- Roch Wamytan, President of the Congress of New Caledonia said "The context" is not favourable to "discussions with the President of the Republic", after the cancellation of the videoconference proposed to Caledonian elected representatives by Emmanuel Macron. "How can you discuss with the President of the Republic under these conditions?" he continued. "We accepted the principle of discussions, except that to be able to meet the President of the Republic and listen to what he had to say to us, it was normal to prepare in advance. For me, it wasn't possible to do that today."
- French Justice Minister Eric Dupond-Moretti has called on prosecutors to "take the strongest possible action against the perpetrators of the violence" and also indicated he was considering transferring the "criminals" to mainland France.
- French Home Affairs and Overseas minister Gérald Darmanin told public TV channel France 2 he had placed 10 leaders of the CCAT (an organisation linked with FLNKS) under home detention. "This is a Mafia-like body which I do not amalgamate with political pro-independence parties...[CCAT] is a group that claims itself to be pro-independence and commits looting, murders and violence," "I have numerous elements which show this is a Mafia-like, violent organisation that loots stores and shoots real bullets at (French) gendarmes, sets businesses on fire and attacks even pro-independence institutions." "Massive reinforcements were to arrive shortly and the French state would "totally regain control", he said.



- The National Council of Chiefs of the Indigenous Kanak condemned "all acts of vandalism and gun violence", but rejected the allegations that the pro-independence movement was involved in the deadly violence. Grand Chief Hippolyte Sinewami-Htamumu expressed full support for the pro-independence group, which has mobilised more than a hundred thousand people "of all ages and from all backgrounds" in peaceful protests in recent months in the capital, Nouméa, and throughout the island. "This is not a 'terrorist group' or 'mafia group', as certain political leaders want us to believe."
- Romuald Pidjo, from the CCAT's [a pro-independence political group] Kanak delegation in Paris, on the anger of young people in Nouméa's working-class neighbourhoods [where some of the worst violence has taken place]. "These are people who are very disadvantaged, people who have been left behind. And what do they see, all these people, every day? They see people who've come from mainland France, who have big cars. And they have nothing! The straw that broke the camel's back was this constitutional bill in which the state is going to say: 'We're going to continue to bring in people who are going to crush you, who are going to take everything in this country'."
- Leaders of a Kanak Workers Union in Paris appealed for calm and said they were deeply saddened by deaths in their faraway homeland. "We wish to see the French government make a strong political statement rather than send troops," union leader Rock Haocas told reporters. "Starting a conversation would be a strong political statement."
- Cook Islands Prime Minister Mark Brown [and outgoing PIF Chair] said greater autonomy for the indigenous Kanak population is needed. "If there's one thing that specific countries value, it is the sovereignty and independence. To be able to have control over the destiny of your own country." "My initial view of the unrest that's occurring in Caledonia, it is cause to recognise greater autonomy and greater independence from the people on those islands. "As a member of the Forum now, we will be able to provide support assistance to these member countries as to the best way forward without trying to try to avoid any escalation of conflict."
- Henry Puna, outgoing secretary-general of the Pacific Islands Forum told journalists at his final news conference that "to see the collapse [and], protesting is very unfortunate", but it was predictable. He said the issue "has been boiling" since the 2021 independence referendum in the French territory, the third and final vote under the Nouméa Accord, which was boycotted by the pro-indigenous Kanak population. He said he was there in December 2021 to monitor the independence referendum when it was taken and "it was unfortunate that it was allowed to go ahead during that time". "We were in the middle of [the] Covid [pandemic] and the Kanak custom is that when somebody passes they mourn that for one year. So they weren't allowed that freedom. "As a result, they didn't want to take part in the referendum because they couldn't go against their tradition and go campaigning or do other work. That's disrespectful for the custom."
- Vanuatu's prime minister, Charlot Salwai (also chairman of the Melanesian Spearhead Group, which also includes Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands) said the indiscriminate destruction of property would affect New Caledonia's economy in a big way and have a cascading effect on the lives of all New Caledonians, including Kanaks. He said France should establish dialogue with FLNKS, which has condemned the violence, and annul the constitutional reform that sparked the crisis. "These events could have been avoided if the French government had listened."
- French High Commissioner in Noumea Louis Le Franc said in a televised news conference the protesters were causing a "dire situation" for medicine and food for the population. He said main and secondary roads in Noumea were blocked by barricades with burning cars and car carcasses, some with booby traps.
- Australia's foreign affairs minister, Penny Wong, said Australians were advised to reconsider their need to travel to New Caledonia due to "civil unrest, travel disruption and

limited essential services". "Again I repeat and take this opportunity to repeat Australia's call for calm. We respect and support the referendum process ... and the discussions under way between all parties, and encourage all parties to work together cooperatively to shape the future of New Caledonia."

- Labour Party Deputy Leader Carmel Sepuloni said the growing unrest was a concern. At last year's Pacific Islands Forum, French Polynesian representatives were already expressing concern about how some policies from the French government might affect its indigenous population, she said.

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**From:** [Noumea.Intel](#)  
**To:** [NOUMEA](#); [PACPF](#); [DCE](#); [...PACIFIC POSTS](#); [DS AAG](#); [DS EMA](#); [DS MLG](#); [AUS](#); [EUR](#); [ISED](#); [SORD Security](#); [CON](#); [PARIS](#); [FM.P/S MFA \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.P/S Associate MFA \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.Defence \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.DPMC \(FPA\) \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.Police \(Seemail\)](#); [s6\(a\)](#) [FM.Police \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.Customs Service \(Seemail\)](#); [PACMM](#); [PACREG](#); [PHM](#); [DEVPP](#); [DEVECO](#); [...EUROPEAN POSTS](#); [SAPD](#); [PRD](#)  
**Cc:** [Noumea.ResponseManager](#); [Noumea.Controller](#); [Noumea.MinLiaison](#); [Noumea.ConsularRM](#); [Noumea.AssistedDepartures](#); [Noumea.Logistics](#); [Noumea.Planning](#); [Noumea.Intel](#); [SCMU@dpmc.govt.nz](#); [fiona.dally@mbie.govt.nz](#); [chris.shaw@mbie.govt.nz](#); [mike.hill@caa.govt.nz](#); [Ben.king@dpmc.govt.nz](#); [...YEOMANS\\_Sally \(Inet\)](#); [...YEOMANS\\_Sally \(Inet\)](#); [Vanessa.berry@customs.govt.nz](#); [sean.bolton@dpmc.govt.nz](#); [Cherie.bliithe@dpmc.govt.nz](#); [c.vandermeulen@transport.govt.nz](#); [KANE, Jared \(PEP\)](#); [Chris.Scahill@TeWhatuOra.govt.nz](#); [Michael.inglis@mpi.govt.nz](#); [sarah.tuihalangingie@mpi.govt.nz](#); [zubair.ali@mpi.govt.nz](#); [Miguel.Navarro@mpi.govt.nz](#); [Julian.Grey@dpmc.govt.nz](#); [noc@mpi.govt.nz](#); [SUE.EDEN@nzdf.mil.nz](#); [David.Williams@nzdf.mil.nz](#); [Contact](#); [LAW\\_Anna \(PRD\)](#)  
**Subject:** RE: FORMAL MESSAGE: SITREP 16: New Caledonia Unrest - Wednesday 22 May  
**Date:** Wednesday, 22 May 2024 12:00:21 pm

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[RESTRICTED]

Resending with expanded distribution.

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**From:** Noumea.Intel  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 22 May 2024 11:36 AM  
**To:** NOUMEA <NOU@mfat.govt.nz>; PACPF <PACPF@mfat.govt.nz>; DCE <DCE@mfat.govt.nz>; ...PACIFIC POSTS <PACIFICPOSTS@mfat.govt.nz>; DS AAG <DM-DSAAG@mfat.govt.nz>; DS EMA <DM-DSEMA@mfat.govt.nz>; DS MLG <DM-DSMLG@mfat.govt.nz>; AUS <DM-AUS@mfat.govt.nz>; EUR <DM-EUR@mfat.govt.nz>; ISED <DM-ISED@mfat.govt.nz>; SORD Security <DM-SEC@mfat.govt.nz>; CON <DM-CONS@mfat.govt.nz>; PARIS <PAR@mfat.govt.nz>; FM.P/S MFA (Seemail) <PS.MFA@mfat.govt.nz>; FM.P/S Associate MFA (Seemail) <PSAssociateMFASeemail@mfat.govt.nz>; FM.Defence (Seemail) <fm.defence@nzdf.mil.nz>; FM.DPMC (FPA) (Seemail) <DPMCFPA@mfat.govt.nz>; FM.Police (Seemail) <Registry.NIC@police.govt.nz>; s6(a) FM.Police (Seemail) <Registry.NIC@police.govt.nz>; FM.Customs Service (Seemail) <cables@customs.govt.nz>; PACMM <PACMM@mfat.govt.nz>; PACREG <PACREG@mfat.govt.nz>; PHM <PHM@mfat.govt.nz>; DEVPP <DM-DEVPP@mfat.govt.nz>; DEVECO <DM-DEVECO@mfat.govt.nz>; ...EUROPEAN POSTS <EUROPEANPOSTS@mfat.govt.nz>; SAPD <DM-SAPD@mfat.govt.nz>; 'PRD@mfat.govt.nz' <PRD@mfat.govt.nz>  
**Cc:** Noumea.Controller <Noumea.Controller@mfat.govt.nz>; Noumea.ResponseManager <Noumea.ResponseManager@mfat.govt.nz>; Noumea.MinLiaison <Noumea.MinLiaison@mfat.govt.nz>; Noumea.ConsularRM <Noumea.ConsularRM@mfat.govt.nz>; Noumea.Intel <Noumea.Intel@mfat.govt.nz>  
**Subject:** FORMAL MESSAGE: SITREP 16: New Caledonia Unrest - Wednesday 22 May

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Executive Summary SitRep 16: New Caledonia Unrest – Wednesday 22 May

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### **Key media messages**

- New Zealand is seriously concerned about the situation and violent protests in Noumea.
- The safety of New Zealanders in New Caledonia is an urgent priority for us. We are aware of around 265 New Zealanders in New Caledonia.
- A New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) C-130 arrived back in New Zealand around 10.00pm last night (Tuesday 21 May), bringing home 48 New Zealanders who had been stranded in New Caledonia since violent protests erupted there last week.

- Yesterday's flight carried 48 passengers with the most pressing needs from Nouméa to Auckland.
- MFAT is working with the French authorities on a further flight out of Noumea today, to be operated by the French.
- New Zealand consular staff in Noumea will continue to prioritise passengers for flights on a needs basis.
- Logistical arrangements for today's flight and subsequent flights are still being worked through by MFAT and NZDF staff.
- We are working hard with France and Australia to ensure that further assisted departure flights can operate in the coming days.
- We have asked those registered with us on SafeTravel to let us know if they wish to express their interest in any potential further flight options, following the first flight out yesterday.
- *[If asked about other foreign nationals on the NZDF flight]:* A small number of seats were also offered to other nationals with urgent needs.
- *[If asked about the specifics of the potential NZDF deployment]:* We are not able to share details on specifics at this stage.

s9(2)(g)(i)

#### *Assisted Departures*

- French Authorities granted approval for a NZDF plane to repatriate New Zealanders yesterday (Tuesday 21 May). Minister Peters put out a [press release](#) announcing the assisted departure flight, and also posted on [twitter/X](#).
- The C-130 departed from Whenuapai yesterday afternoon (Tuesday 21 May) and landed at Magenta Domestic Airport, Noumea. The return flight arrived back at Auckland International Airport around 10.00pm. This flight repatriated 48 people. Planning continues for subsequent flights.

- s6(b)(i)

We have been instructed to plan for 50 passengers on today's flight and the operation to get them on the flight is currently under way. NZDF is preparing to deploy an asset to Brisbane to meet the French flight and bring the New Zealand passengers directly to Auckland, with anticipated arrival time at approximately 1.00am on Thursday 23 May.

- s6(a), s6(b)(i)

- A New Zealand Immigration Liaison Officer from MBIE travelled up to Noumea on yesterday's flight and will remain in-country to manage immigration screening throughout the duration of the response. There are also ten NZDF logistical support staff now in Noumea working with the New Zealand Consulate General and deployed MFAT Consular Team, assisting with arrangements for assisted departures.

*In Noumea*

- The death toll from the unrest currently sits at six people.
- French President Emmanuel Macron is travelling to New Caledonia, where he intends to meet with local representatives for a day of talks on Thursday 23 May. Latest reporting suggests he will arrive on Thursday morning, accompanied by the French Minister for the Interior [Darmanin] and Overseas and French Defence Minister [Lecornu].
- President Macron convened a third national security and defence council meeting in the early hours **yesterday** morning (Tuesday 21 May NZ time). The council announced that Tontouta Airport will remain closed **to commercial flights** until Thursday 23 May with more military personnel **brought in** to protect government buildings.
- President Macron noted clear progress in restoring order and that “All measures are being taken to enable tourists still present in the archipelago to return home”. French officials advised they **wished** to start moving foreign nationals out of New Caledonia **yesterday** (Tuesday 21 May).
- While the situation appears to be stabilising, violence and clashes with security forces continue. Damage assessments estimate the cost at around XPF 40 billion (approximately NZ\$590 million). An estimated 2,000 jobs have also been impacted.

#### *New Zealand's response*

- Minister Peters put out a [press release](#) announcing the assisted departure flight, and also [posted on twitter/X](#), ["We were pleased 48 NZers arrived back from New Caledonia on a NZ Government plane into Auckland last night. We are working with France & Australia on a further flight today to bring another group of Kiwis in New Caledonia home via Brisbane, using French & NZ aircraft."](#)
- Minister Peters also spoke with [Checkpoint](#) and [Newstalk ZB](#) **yesterday** evening [Tuesday 21 May].
- s6(a)

MFAT officials understand this may be the case until airports open and commercial flights resume, lessening the need for assisted departures (note: the next Air New Zealand scheduled flight is Saturday 25 May). s6(a)

#### **Consular response**

- We are aware of around **265** New Zealanders **remaining** in New Caledonia. New Zealanders in New Caledonia are urged to register on SafeTravel and keep their registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their ‘departure date’ is updated.
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia should stay in place and avoid all protests, monitor local media for developments, and comply with any instructions and restrictions issued by local authorities.
- NZ Consulate General and Consular Call Centre staff continue to conduct welfare checks on New Zealanders in New Caledonia. Since the unrest erupted, Ministry officials have met with over 100 New Zealanders at hotels to relay updates and answer questions, and will continue to do so.
- New Zealand's current travel alert level for all of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential travel** (Level 3 of 4). This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.

## ANNEX: Full SitRep 16: New Caledonia Unrest – Wednesday 22 May

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### **Key media messages**

#### *Political situation*

- New Zealand is seriously concerned about the situation and violent protests in Noumea.
- The safety of New Zealanders in New Caledonia is an urgent priority for us. We are aware of around 265 New Zealanders remaining in New Caledonia.
- A New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) C-130 arrived back in New Zealand around 10pm last night (Tuesday 21 May) bringing home New Zealanders who have been stranded in New Caledonia since violent protests erupted there last week.
- Yesterday's flight carried 48 passengers with the most pressing needs from Noumea to Auckland. Passengers for subsequent flights will be prioritised on a needs basis by consular staff.
- MFAT is working with the French authorities on a further flight out of Noumea today, to be operated by the French.
- New Zealand consular staff in Noumea will continue to prioritise passengers for flights on a needs basis.
- Logistical arrangements for today's flight and subsequent flights are still being worked through by MFAT and NZDF staff.
- We are working hard with France and Australia to ensure that further flights can operate in the coming days.
- *[If asked about other foreign nationals on the NZDF flight]:* A small number of seats were also offered to other nationals with urgent needs.
- We have asked those registered with us on SafeTravel to let us know if they wish to express their interest in any potential further flight options, following the first flight out yesterday.
- New Zealand and Australian Foreign Ministers held a joint call with the French Foreign Minister Stephane Sejourne on Monday 20 May. s6(b)(i)
- *[If asked about transport on the ground/road access to airports, etc.]:* We continue to work with relevant authorities on the ground to understand security and access issues, including for travel to airports in Noumea.
- *[If raised: independence of New Caledonia]* The question of independence is one for the people of New Caledonia to decide with France. We acknowledge that the political and economic situation in New Caledonia is challenging and reiterate calls on all Parties to find a solution. We hope that peace and calm will prevail.
- s6(a) The immediate priority must be for all sides to take steps to de-escalate the situation, so that there can be dialogue and calm. No matter your views on the political arrangements in New Caledonia, everyone should agree that violence is harmful to every community there.
- *[If raised: PIF Members and Secretariat comments on crisis]* The Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) is the region's pre-eminent political entity and it is understandable that Forum Members and the PIF Secretariat are following developments in New Caledonia closely.

We recognise and share the concern felt among Forum Members at the recent violence. We engage in a consistent manner with all Forum Members, including New Caledonia, on PIF matters and put high value on the centrality and unity of the PIF. It is for individual countries to make their own assessments on the situation in New Caledonia. New Zealand has been very clear on the need for all sides to take steps to de-escalate, so that there can be dialogue and calm.

- s6(a)

#### *Consular response*

- We are aware of 265 New Zealanders remaining in New Caledonia.
- New Zealanders are urged to keep their SafeTravel Registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their 'departure date' is updated.
- New Zealanders in need of immediate consular assistance should contact the 24/7 Consular Emergency line on +64 99 20 20 20.
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia should stay in place and avoid all protests, monitor local media for developments, and comply with any instructions and restrictions issued by local authorities.
- Post and Consular Call Centre staff continue to conduct welfare checks on New Zealanders in New Caledonia. Since the unrest erupted, MFAT officials in Noumea have met with over 100 Kiwis at hotels to discuss updates and answer questions.
- Officials are regularly speaking with New Caledonian authorities regarding airport operations and access, and ongoing needs in relation to critical supplies such as food and medicine.
- At present, with the Tontouta international airport remaining closed to commercial flights, there is no safe way to leave New Caledonia.
- New Zealand's current travel alert level for all of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential travel** (Level 3 of 4). This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.
- We recommend that all travellers remain in contact with their airline for any updates on flight bookings. Travellers should also contact their travel insurance provider if travel has been disrupted.
- *[If asked why the NZ Consulate in Noumea is closed]* Due to the State of Emergency in New Caledonia, and the security requirement to stay home/in place, **New Zealand** Consulate staff are working remotely. Callers to the Consulate are being directed to New Zealand's 24/7 Consular Emergency line.

#### Latest developments

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##### **Key developments**

##### *Assisted Departures*

- The C-130 departed from Whenuapai **yesterday** afternoon (Tuesday 21 May) and landed at Magenta Domestic Airport, Noumea. The return flight **arrived** back at Auckland International Airport 10.00pm.
- **This first assisted departure flight repatriated 48 people.** Planning continues for

subsequent flights.

- Minister Peters put out a [press release](#) announcing the assisted departure flight, and also posted on [twitter/X](#). Minister Peters also spoke with [Checkpoint](#) and [Newstalk ZB](#) yesterday evening [Tuesday 21 May].
- In parallel, the French approved the assisted departure of Australian nationals via two Australian C-130 flights from Magenta yesterday (Tuesday 21 May). [Australia's Senator Wong](#) also posted to confirm the Australian flights. [Australia's Senator Wong has posted on Twitter/X to confirm work with French authorities for further flights.](#)
- s6(b)(i)

We have been instructed to plan for 50 passengers on today's flight and the operation to get them on the flight is currently under way. NZDF is preparing to deploy an asset to Brisbane to meet the French flight and bring the New Zealand passengers directly back to Auckland, with anticipated arrival time at approximately 1.00am on Thursday 23 May.

- s6(a)
- A New Zealand Immigration Liaison Officer from MBIE has travelled up to Noumea on yesterday's flight and will remain in-country to manage immigration screening throughout the duration of the response. [There are also ten NZDF logistical support staff now in Noumea working with the New Zealand Consulate General and deployed MFAT Consular arrangements for assisted departures.](#)
- Following the trilateral call with Minister Peters and the Foreign Ministers of France and Australia on Monday 20 May, both [MFA](#) and [Senator Wong](#) posted on twitter/X reiterating the request for access for repatriation flights.

#### *In Noumea*

- One person has been killed and two more injured in an exchange of gunfire on Saturday 18 May as they tried to pass a barricade near Kaala-Gomen. This brings the death toll to six, including 2 gendarmes and 3 Kanak. A body was also found in Noumea harbour – the circumstances of this death are not yet clear and may be unrelated.
- [French President Emmanuel Macron is travelling to New Caledonia, where he intends to meet with local representatives for a day of talks on Thursday 23 May. Latest reporting suggests he will arrive on Thursday morning, accompanied by the French Minister for the Interior \[Darmanin\] and Overseas and French Defence Minister \[Lecornu\].](#)
- President Macron convened a third national security and defence council meeting in the early hours this morning (Tuesday 21 May NZ time). The council announced that Tontouta Airport will remain closed until Thursday 23 May and more military personnel will be sent in to protect government buildings.
- President Macron noted clear progress in restoring order and that "All measures are being taken to enable tourists still present in the archipelago to return home". French officials have advised they wish to start moving foreign nationals out of New Caledonia yesterday (Tuesday 21 May).
- The French High Commissioner statement last night included that "Republican order here



will be re-established whatever the cost". He said that the authorities had regained control of the road between Noumea and the International Airport. Around 60 roadblocks had been dismantled, but the clean-up and repair operation would last several days. Due to this, the authorities assess that the road will not be useable until the weekend (i.e. Saturday 25 May) at the earliest.

- The High Commissioner also called on those with weapons to hand them in and warned of the potential consequences should they be used against trained French security forces.
- While the situation appears to be stabilising, violence and clashes with security forces continue. Revised damage assessments estimate the cost at around XPF 40 billion (approximately NZ\$590 million). An estimated 2,000 jobs have also been impacted.
- The Ministry has organised transportation to support movement of people from hotels to airports. <sup>s6(a)</sup>  
This will likely be needed for assisted departure flights or when commercial options reopen.
- There are still outer suburbs of Noumea that remain largely inaccessible, including by police forces who are generally the target of the violence. A "demining" exercise would need to be carried out before the safety of the roads could be guaranteed.
- The 6pm to 6am curfew will remain in force for the full duration of the state of emergency. This curfew covers the entire territory of New Caledonia. The local government has announced that schools will be closed next week.
- French reinforcements were focused on restoring freedom of movement by removing barricades and hazards; restocking supermarkets and pharmacies, and ensuring the efficient movement of supplies around New Caledonia; and supporting the function of health services, ensuring access was available to those in need.
- French officials confirmed last night that New Caledonia has sufficient provisions of food and medicine, including additional supplies that have arrived in the port. Ministry officials have confirmed that supermarkets are being restocked with some food items.
- 20 shops have reopened and the New Caledonian Government have said many of the shops will be restocked Monday 20 May.

#### *New Zealand's response*

- Minister Peters put out a [press release](#) announcing the assisted departure flight, and also [posted on twitter/X](#), "[We were pleased 48 NZers arrived back from New Caledonia on a NZ Government plane into Auckland last night. We are working with France & Australia on a further flight today to bring another group of Kiwis in New Caledonia home via Brisbane, using French & NZ aircraft.](#)"
- 48 New Zealanders were repatriated to Auckland via the NZDF C-130 flight yesterday (Tuesday 21 May). Officials continue to work with French authorities regarding subsequent flights.
- A New Zealand Immigration Liaison Officer has been deployed to Noumea on the first repatriation flight and will remain in country to manage immigration screening requirements across the duration of the response.
- <sup>s6(a)</sup>

MFAT officials understand that this may be the case until airports open and commercial flights resume, lessening the need for assisted departures (note: the next Air New Zealand scheduled flight is Saturday 25 May). <sup>s6(a)</sup>

s6(a)

- Ministry officials are following up with French authorities in Paris and Noumea to advocate for Thursday's planned French operated assisted departure to arrive in Auckland rather than Brisbane. The return leg of this flight could be used to repatriate the approximately <sup>s6(a)</sup> French New Caledonians currently in New Zealand.
- s6(a)
- MFA spoke with Pacific Islands Forum Chair Prime Minister Mark Brown at 3:30pm Saturday 18 May. The discussion included New Zealand's desire to work with Pacific partners to help calm the situation down, and the role of the PIF to facilitate dialogue and promote de-escalation in the region. Officials are also exploring calls for MFA with the Prime Ministers of Fiji and Tonga.
- Officials have been advised of a protest planned outside the Embassy of France at 12pm Wednesday 22 May. This is being organised by Peace Action Wellington via social media, rallied by pro-Palestine groups and is intended to be in solidarity with the Kanak people in New Caledonia. A police presence is being organised for additional security around the Embassy. MFAT is in touch with police and French officials.

#### *Consular*

- We are aware of around 265 New Zealanders remaining in New Caledonia. New Zealanders are urged to keep their SafeTravel Registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their 'departure date' is updated.
- MFAT has upgraded SafeTravel alert level to Level 3 (out of 4) for the whole of New Caledonia "**Avoid non-essential travel**" in New Caledonia due to ongoing civil unrest.
- Post and Consular Call Centre staff continue to conduct welfare checks on Kiwis in New Caledonia. Since the unrest erupted, Ministry officials have met with over 100 Kiwis at hotels to discuss updates and answer questions. A Ministry official and a representative of Air New Zealand have met with Kiwis at two Noumea hotels. Approximately 60 people were present.
- s9(2)(ba)(i)

#### *Diplomatic outreach*

- New Zealand has formal consular obligations to Switzerland, Netherlands, and Samoa.  
s6(a)
- s6(a)
- s6(a), s6(b)(i)

- s6(a), s6(b)(i)

#### Staff welfare

- MFAT staff in Noumea are all reported safe and well. MFAT head office is in regular contact and has deployed two additional staff to provide surge assistance in the coming days (should air travel allow).
- s9(2)(a)

#### Contacts

- The MFAT Emergency Coordination Centre will operate from 8am-8pm daily and through the weekend. Please direct emails to:
  - Incident controller [Noumea.Controller@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.Controller@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Response manager [Noumea.ResponseManager@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.ResponseManager@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Consular response manager [Noumea.ConsularRM@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.ConsularRM@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Intel [Noumea.Intel@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.Intel@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Ministerial liaison [Noumea.MinLiaison@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.MinLiaison@mfat.govt.nz)

#### Media comments by other Leaders

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- President Emmanuel Macron "noted clear progress in restoring order" following his convening of the third national security and defence council meeting overnight (Tuesday 21 May).
- New Caledonian representative in the French National Assembly Nicolas Metzdorf <sup>s6(a)</sup> returned to New Caledonia last night on board a French military plane. In a radio interview on Monday 20 May, Metzdorf labelled the CCAT a "terrorist organisation" and also criticised the state for not being prepared for the current situation. Metzdorf also stated his view that the legislative process to open the electoral roll had to continue; if not it would be giving in to the CCAT, and would mean that their actions had been successful.
- President Macron strongly condemned the "inacceptable violence, destruction, intimidation and assaults against persons, property and law enforcement agents" that has taken place in New Caledonia for the past three days. Macron has sent an invitation by way of a letter, to New Caledonia's politicians, for a meeting in Paris.
- French Prime Minister Gabriel Attal, "Everything is being done to restore order and calm that Caledonians deserve," after a meeting at the presidential palace on Wednesday. He said the situation "remains very tense, with looting, riots, arson and attacks, which are unbearable and unspeakable". Speaking before the National Assembly on Tuesday, underlined the opportunity for those talks to resume and called on New Caledonia's parties to "seize the opportunity of this extended hand" to resume dialogue. "Only dialogue will allow us to appease tensions. Our hand remains extended. We need an inclusive political solution that can satisfy all stakeholders and that's why we are offering New Caledonian leaders to discuss and build together the future of New Caledonia", he told Parliament during question time.
- On Friday CCAT (an independence political party) issued a statement calling for "a time of

calm to break the spiral of violence". The CCAT issued a new communiqué at midday on Friday. "In the face of the State's stubborn determination to impose constitutional change, we denounce the State's irresponsibility and hold it responsible for the loss of human life, the atrocities and the devastation of the country's economic fabric." The CCAT says it is deeply affected by the loss of these lives, "those of our young people murdered by militias backed by the State and non-independence leaders, and that of the young gendarme". In this press release, the cell coordinating field actions calls for appeasement. "A time for appeasement to halt the escalation of violence." He added: "It's a break in our fight. It expresses the CCAT's determination to preserve life. We're keeping up the pressure through our presence at phase 2.5 on the ground, maintaining filtering traffic for all citizens."

- Roch Wamytan, President of the Congress of New Caledonia said "The context" is not favourable to "discussions with the President of the Republic", after the cancellation of the videoconference proposed to Caledonian elected representatives by Emmanuel Macron. "How can you discuss with the President of the Republic under these conditions?" he continued. "We accepted the principle of discussions, except that to be able to meet the President of the Republic and listen to what he had to say to us, it was normal to prepare in advance. For me, it wasn't possible to do that today."
- French Justice Minister Eric Dupond-Moretti has called on prosecutors to "take the strongest possible action against the perpetrators of the violence" and also indicated he was considering transferring the "criminals" to mainland France.
- French Home Affairs and Overseas minister Gérald Darmanin told public TV channel France 2 he had placed 10 leaders of the CCAT (an organisation linked with FLNKS) under home detention. "This is a Mafia-like body which I do not amalgamate with political pro-independence parties...[CCAT] is a group that claims itself to be pro-independence and commits looting, murders and violence." "I have numerous elements which show this is a Mafia-like, violent organisation that loots stores and shoots real bullets at (French) gendarmes, sets businesses on fire and attacks even pro-independence institutions." "Massive reinforcements were to arrive shortly and the French state would "totally regain control", he said.
- The National Council of Chiefs of the Indigenous Kanak condemned "all acts of vandalism and gun violence", but rejected the allegations that the pro-independence movement was involved in the deadly violence. Grand Chief Hippolyte Sinewami-Htamumu expressed full support for the pro-independence group, which has mobilised more than a hundred thousand people "of all ages and from all backgrounds" in peaceful protests in recent months in the capital, Nouméa, and throughout the island. "This is not a 'terrorist group' or 'mafia group', as certain political leaders want us to believe."
- Romuald Pidjo, from the CCAT's [a pro-independence political group] Kanak delegation in Paris, on the anger of young people in Nouméa's working-class neighbourhoods [where some of the worst violence has taken place]. "These are people who are very disadvantaged, people who have been left behind. And what do they see, all these people, every day? They see people who've come from mainland France, who have big cars. And they have nothing! The straw that broke the camel's back was this constitutional bill in which the state is going to say: 'We're going to continue to bring in people who are going to crush you, who are going to take everything in this country'."
- Leaders of a Kanak Workers Union in Paris appealed for calm and said they were deeply saddened by deaths in their faraway homeland. "We wish to see the French government make a strong political statement rather than send troops," union leader Rock Haocas told reporters. "Starting a conversation would be a strong political statement."
- Cook Islands Prime Minister Mark Brown [and outgoing PIF Chair] said greater autonomy for the indigenous Kanak population is needed. "If there's one thing that specific countries

value, it is the sovereignty and independence. To be able to have control over the destiny of your own country." "My initial view of the unrest that's occurring in Caledonia, it is cause to recognise greater autonomy and greater independence from the people on those islands. "As a member of the Forum now, we will be able to provide support assistance to these member countries as to the best way forward without trying to try to avoid any escalation of conflict."

- Henry Puna, outgoing secretary-general of the Pacific Islands Forum told journalists at his final news conference that "to see the collapse [and], protesting is very unfortunate", but it was predictable. He said the issue "has been boiling" since the 2021 independence referendum in the French territory, the third and final vote under the Nouméa Accord, which was boycotted by the pro-indigenous Kanak population. He said he was there in December 2021 to monitor the independence referendum when it was taken and "it was unfortunate that it was allowed to go ahead during that time". "We were in the middle of [the] Covid [pandemic] and the Kanak custom is that when somebody passes they mourn that for one year. So they weren't allowed that freedom. "As a result, they didn't want to take part in the referendum because they couldn't go against their tradition and go campaigning or do other work. That's disrespectful for the custom."
- Vanuatu's prime minister, Charlot Salwai (also chairman of the Melanesian Spearhead Group, which also includes Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands) said the indiscriminate destruction of property would affect New Caledonia's economy in a big way and have a cascading effect on the lives of all New Caledonians, including Kanaks. He said France should establish dialogue with FLNKS, which has condemned the violence, and annul the constitutional reform that sparked the crisis. "These events could have been avoided if the French government had listened."
- French High Commissioner in Noumea Louis Le Franc said in a televised news conference the protesters were causing a "dire situation" for medicine and food for the population. He said main and secondary roads in Noumea were blocked by barricades with burning cars and car carcasses, some with booby traps.
- Australia's foreign affairs minister, Penny Wong, said Australians were advised to reconsider their need to travel to New Caledonia due to "civil unrest, travel disruption and limited essential services". "Again I repeat and take this opportunity to repeat Australia's call for calm. We respect and support the referendum process ... and the discussions under way between all parties, and encourage all parties to work together cooperatively to shape the future of New Caledonia."
- Labour Party Deputy Leader Carmel Sepuloni said the growing unrest was a concern. At last year's Pacific Islands Forum, French Polynesian representatives were already expressing concern about how some policies from the French government might affect its indigenous population, she said.

**From:** [Noumea.Intel](#)  
**To:** [NOUMEA; PACPE; DCE; ...PACIFIC POSTS; DS AAG; DS EMA; DS MLG; AUS; EUR; ISED; SORD Security; CON; PARIS; FM.P/S MFA \(Seemail\); FM.P/S Associate MFA \(Seemail\); FM.Defence \(Seemail\); FM.DPMC \(FPA\) \(Seemail\); FM.Police \(Seemail\); s6\(a\) FM.Police \(Seemail\); FM.Customs Service \(Seemail\); PACMM; PACREG; PHM; DEVPP; DEVFCCO; ...EUROPEAN POSTS; SAPD; PRD@mfat.govt.nz](#)  
**Cc:** [Noumea.ResponseManager; Noumea.Controller; Noumea.MinLiaison; Noumea.ConsularRM; Noumea.AssistedDepartures; Noumea.Logistics; Noumea.Planning; Noumea.Intel; "SCMU@dpmc.govt.nz"; "fiona.dally@mbie.govt.nz"; "chris.shaw@mbie.govt.nz"; "mike.hill@caa.govt.nz"; "Ben.king@dpmc.govt.nz"; ...YEOMANS\\_Sally \(Inet\); ...YEOMANS\\_Sally \(Inet\); ...YEOMANS\\_Sally \(Inet\); ...YEOMANS\\_Sally \(Inet\); "Vanessa.berry@customs.govt.nz"; "sean.bolton@dpmc.govt.nz"; "Cherie.bliithe@dpmc.govt.nz"; "c.vandermeulen@transport.govt.nz"; KANE, Jared \(PEP\); "Chris.Scahill@TeWhatuOra.govt.nz"; "Michael.inglis@mpi.govt.nz"; "sarah.tuihalangie@mpi.govt.nz"; "zubair.ali@mpi.govt.nz"; "Miguel.Navarro@mpi.govt.nz"; "Julian.Grey@dpmc.govt.nz"; "noc@mpi.govt.nz"; "SUE.EDEN@nzdf.mil.nz"; "David.Williams@nzdf.mil.nz"; LAW, Anna \(PRD\); BARRINGTON, Svar \(PACREG\); PETERS, Sonya \(CMD\); FM.Immigration NZ \(Seemail\); "kathleen.pearce@defence.govt.nz"; "MODPacific@defence.govt.nz"](#)  
**Subject:** FORMAL MESSAGE: SITREP 17: New Caledonia Unrest - Wednesday 22 May  
**Date:** Wednesday, 22 May 2024 8:04:00 pm

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## Executive Summary SitRep 17: New Caledonia Unrest – Wednesday 22 May

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### Key media messages

- New Zealand is seriously concerned about the situation and violent protests in Noumea.
- The safety of New Zealanders in New Caledonia is an urgent priority for us. We are aware of around 225 New Zealanders remaining in New Caledonia that wish to depart.
- A French-operated flight is bringing 49 stranded travellers to Brisbane tonight, with an NZDF flight arranged for the onward travel from Brisbane to New Zealand.
- The French flight departed Tontouta Airport a short time ago (Wednesday 22 May). The flight from Brisbane to Auckland is due to arrive at Auckland International Airport around 1:30 am NZ time (Thursday 23 May).
- MFAT is working with French and Australian authorities on logistics.
- A New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) C-130 arrived back in New Zealand around 10.00pm last night (Tuesday 21 May), bringing 48 passengers back to New Zealand who had been stranded in New Caledonia since violent protests erupted there last week.
- Yesterday's flight carried 48 passengers with the most pressing needs from Nouméa to Auckland.
- New Zealand consular staff in Noumea will continue to prioritise passengers for flights on a needs basis.
- Logistical arrangements for today's flight and subsequent flights are still being worked through by MFAT and NZDF staff.
- We are working hard with France and Australia to ensure that further assisted departure flights can operate in the coming days.
- We have asked those registered with us on SafeTravel to let us know if they wish to express their interest in any potential further flight options, following the first flight out yesterday.
- *[If asked about the specifics of the potential NZDF deployment]:* We are not able to share details on specifics at this stage.

s9(2)(g)(i)

*Assisted Departures*

- French Authorities granted approval for a NZDF plane to repatriate **travellers to** New Zealand yesterday (Tuesday 21 May). This flight repatriated 48 people back to Auckland late last night. Minister Peters put out a [press release](#) announcing the assisted departure flight, and also posted on [twitter/X](#).
- The French **are operating** their own assisted departure flights on MRTT **aircraft**. They assess that they can move 200 people per flight, taking them to Brisbane (a mixture of nationalities). **The first French operated assisted departure flight departed Noumea this evening (Wednesday 22 May). A NZDF 757 is en route to Brisbane to meet the French aircraft and return passengers to New Zealand.**
- **French authorities have told us that the proposed flight for tomorrow (Thursday 23 May) will not go ahead** <sup>s6(a)</sup> **The flight on Friday 24 May is still scheduled to go ahead.**
- **MFAT consular staff facilitated 49 passengers on today's flight out of Noumea (Wednesday 22 May) with the operation to transfer them to New Zealand via an NZDF flight is currently under way. NZDF is deploying an asset to Brisbane to meet the French flight and bring the New Zealand passengers directly to Auckland International Airport, with anticipated arrival time approximately 1.30am on Thursday 23 May.**
- **MBIE Temporary Accommodation Service stand ready to provide support to any of the travellers arriving on tomorrow morning's early flight, on a needs only basis if they do not already have accommodation arranged in Auckland.**
- s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

- A New Zealand Immigration Liaison Officer from MBIE travelled up to Noumea on yesterday's flight and will remain in-country to manage immigration screening throughout the duration of the response. There are also ten NZDF logistical support staff now in Noumea working with the New Zealand Consulate General and deployed MFAT Consular Team, assisting with arrangements for assisted departures.

#### *In Noumea*

- The death toll from the unrest currently sits at six people.
- French President Emmanuel Macron is travelling to New Caledonia, where he intends to meet with local representatives for a day of talks on Thursday 23 May. Latest reporting suggests he will arrive on Thursday morning, accompanied by the French Minister for the Interior [Darmanin] and Overseas and French Defence Minister [Lecornu].
- President Macron convened a third national security and defence council meeting in the early hours of Tuesday 21 May NZ time. The council announced that Tontouta Airport will remain closed to commercial flights until Thursday 23 May with more military personnel brought in to protect government buildings.
- President Macron noted clear progress in restoring order and that "All measures are being taken to enable tourists still present in the archipelago to return home". French officials advised they wished to start moving foreign nationals out of New Caledonia yesterday (Tuesday 21 May).
- While the situation appears to be stabilising, violence and clashes with security forces continue. Damage assessments estimate the cost at around XPF 40 billion (approximately NZ\$590 million). An estimated 2,000 jobs have also been impacted.

### *New Zealand's response*

- The Minister of Foreign Affairs this afternoon (22 May 2024) held bilateral calls with the Prime Ministers of Tonga and Fiji this evening, as members of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Troika, to discuss the evolving situation in New Caledonia. MFA shared an update on [Twitter/X](#) of these calls.
- Minister Peters shared an update on [Twitter/X](#) with pictures of those leaving New Caledonia yesterday and urging all New Zealanders in Noumea to register on SafeTravel.
- Minister Peters put out a [press release](#) announcing the assisted departure flight, and also posted on [twitter/X](#), "[We were pleased 48 NZers arrived back from New Caledonia on a NZ Government plane into Auckland last night. We are working with France & Australia on a further flight today to bring another group of Kiwis in New Caledonia home via Brisbane, using French & NZ aircraft.](#)"
- Minister Peters also spoke with [Checkpoint](#) and [Newstalk ZB](#) Tuesday 21 May.
- A planned protest took place in front of the French Embassy in Wellington from 12pm – 1:30pm Wednesday 22 May, in support of Kanak people in New Caledonia. Around 50 people took part in the peaceful protest, which included around 10 speeches, "Kanak resistance" songs and chants in Te Reo Māori. New Zealand Police deployed four officers to monitor the protest and ensure the security of the Embassy. New Zealand media were present at the protest (RNZ).

### **Consular response**

- We are aware of around 225 New Zealanders remaining in New Caledonia **that wish to depart**. New Zealanders in New Caledonia are urged to register on SafeTravel and keep their registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their 'departure date' is updated.
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia should stay in place and avoid all protests, monitor local media for developments, and comply with any instructions and restrictions issued by local authorities.
- NZ Consulate General and Consular Call Centre staff continue to conduct welfare checks on New Zealanders in New Caledonia. Since the unrest erupted, Ministry officials have met with over 100 New Zealanders at hotels to relay updates and answer questions, and will continue to do so.
- New Zealand's current travel alert level for all of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential travel** (Level 3 of 4). This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.

## ANNEX: Full SitRep 17: New Caledonia Unrest – Wednesday 22 May

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### Key media messages

#### *Political situation*

- New Zealand is seriously concerned about the situation and violent protests in Noumea.
- The safety of New Zealanders in New Caledonia is an urgent priority for us. We are aware of around 225 New Zealanders **remaining** in New Caledonia **that wish to depart**.
- A French-operated flight is bringing 49 stranded travellers to Brisbane tonight, with an NZDF flight arranged for the onward travel from Brisbane to New Zealand.
- The French flight departed Tontouta Airport a short time ago (Wednesday 22 May). The flight from Brisbane to Auckland is due to arrive at Auckland International Airport around



1:30 am NZ time (Thursday 23 May).

- MFAT is working with French and Australian authorities on logistics.
- A New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) C-130 arrived back in New Zealand around 10.00pm last night (Tuesday 21 May), bringing 48 passengers back to New Zealand who had been stranded in New Caledonia since violent protests erupted there last week.
- Yesterday's flight carried 48 passengers with the most pressing needs from Nouméa to Auckland. Passengers for subsequent flights will be prioritised on a needs basis by consular staff.
- MFAT is working with the French authorities on a further flight out of Noumea today, to be operated by the French.
- New Zealand consular staff in Noumea will continue to prioritise passengers for flights on a needs basis.
- Logistical arrangements for today's flight and subsequent flights are still being worked through by MFAT and NZDF staff.
- We are working hard with France and Australia to ensure that further flights can operate in the coming days.
- *[If asked about other foreign nationals on the NZDF flight]:* A small number of seats were also offered to other nationals with urgent needs.
- We have asked those registered with us on SafeTravel to let us know if they wish to express their interest in any potential further flight options, following the first flight out yesterday.
- New Zealand and Australian Foreign Ministers held a joint call with the French Foreign Minister Stephane Sejourne on Monday 20 May. s6(b)(i)
- *[If asked about transport on the ground/road access to airports, etc.]:* We continue to work with relevant authorities on the ground to understand security and access issues, including for travel to airports in Noumea.
- *[If raised: independence of New Caledonia]* The question of independence is one for the people of New Caledonia to decide with France. We acknowledge that the political and economic situation in New Caledonia is challenging and reiterate calls on all Parties to find a solution. We hope that peace and calm will prevail.
- s6(a) The immediate priority must be for all sides to take steps to de-escalate the situation, so that there can be dialogue and calm. No matter your views on the political arrangements in New Caledonia, everyone should agree that violence is harmful to every community there.
- *[If raised: PIF Members and Secretariat comments on crisis]* The Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) is the region's pre-eminent political entity and it is understandable that Forum Members and the PIF Secretariat are following developments in New Caledonia closely. We recognise and share the concern felt among Forum Members at the recent violence. We engage in a consistent manner with all Forum Members, including New Caledonia, on PIF matters and put high value on the centrality and unity of the PIF. It is for individual countries to make their own assessments on the situation in New Caledonia. New Zealand has been very clear on the need for all sides to take steps to de-escalate, so that there can be dialogue and calm.
- s6(a)

### Consular response

- We are aware of around 225 New Zealanders remaining in New Caledonia that wish to depart.
- New Zealanders are urged to keep their SafeTravel Registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their 'departure date' is updated.
- New Zealanders in need of immediate consular assistance should contact the 24/7 Consular Emergency line on +64 99 20 20 20.
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia should stay in place and avoid all protests, monitor local media for developments, and comply with any instructions and restrictions issued by local authorities.
- Post and Consular Call Centre staff continue to conduct welfare checks on New Zealanders in New Caledonia. Since the unrest erupted, MFAT officials in Noumea have met with over 100 Kiwis at hotels to discuss updates and answer questions.
- Officials are regularly speaking with New Caledonian authorities regarding airport operations and access, and ongoing needs in relation to critical supplies such as food and medicine.
- At present, with the Tontouta international airport remaining closed to commercial flights, there is no safe way to leave New Caledonia.
- New Zealand's current travel alert level for all of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential travel** (Level 3 of 4). This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.
- We recommend that all travellers remain in contact with their airline for any updates on flight bookings. Travellers should also contact their travel insurance provider if travel has been disrupted.
- *[If asked why the NZ Consulate in Noumea is closed]* Due to the State of Emergency in New Caledonia, and the security requirement to stay home/in place, New Zealand Consulate staff are working remotely. Callers to the Consulate are being directed to New Zealand's 24/7 Consular Emergency line.

### Latest developments

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#### **Key developments**

#### *Assisted Departures*

- French Authorities granted approval for a NZDF plane to repatriate travellers to New Zealand yesterday (Tuesday 21 May). This flight repatriated 48 people back to Auckland late last night. Minister Peters put out a [press release](#) announcing the assisted departure flight, and also posted on [twitter/X](#).
- The French are operating their own assisted departure flights on MRTT aircraft. They assess that they can move 200 people per flight, taking them to Brisbane (a mixture of nationalities). The first French operated assisted departure flight departed Noumea this evening (Wednesday 22 May). A NZDF 757 is en route to Brisbane to meet the French aircraft and return passengers to New Zealand.
- French authorities have told us that the proposed flight for tomorrow (Thursday 23 May)

will not go ahead s6(a)  
still scheduled to go ahead.

The flight on Friday 24 May is

- MFAT consular staff facilitated 49 passengers on today's flight out of Noumea (Wednesday 22 May) with the operation to transfer them to New Zealand via an NZDF flight is currently under way. NZDF is deploying an asset to Brisbane to meet the French flight and bring the New Zealand passengers directly to Auckland International Airport, with anticipated arrival time approximately 1.30am on Thursday 23 May.
- MBIE Temporary Accommodation Service stand ready to provide support to any of the travellers arriving on tomorrow morning's early flight, on a needs only basis if they do not already have accommodation arranged in Auckland.
- s6(a)

- A New Zealand Immigration Liaison Officer from MBIE has travelled up to Noumea on yesterday's flight and will remain in-country to manage immigration screening throughout the duration of the response. There are also ten NZDF logistical support staff now in Noumea working with the New Zealand Consulate General and deployed MFAT Consular arrangements for assisted departures.
- Following the trilateral call with Minister Peters and the Foreign Ministers of France and Australia on Monday 20 May, both [MFA](#) and [Senator Wong](#) posted on twitter/X reiterating the request for access for repatriation flights.

#### *In Noumea*

- One person has been killed and two more injured in an exchange of gunfire on Saturday 18 May as they tried to pass a barricade near Kaala-Gomen. This brings the death toll to six, including 2 gendarmes and 3 Kanak. A body was also found in Noumea harbour – the circumstances of this death are not yet clear and may be unrelated.
- French President Emmanuel Macron is travelling to New Caledonia, where he intends to meet with local representatives for a day of talks on Thursday 23 May. Latest reporting suggests he will arrive on Thursday morning, accompanied by the French Minister for the Interior [Darmanin] and Overseas and French Defence Minister [Lecornu].
- President Macron convened a third national security and defence council meeting in the early hours this morning (Tuesday 21 May NZ time). The council announced that Tontouta Airport will remain closed until Thursday 23 May and more military personnel will be sent in to protect government buildings.
- President Macron noted clear progress in restoring order and that "All measures are being taken to enable tourists still present in the archipelago to return home". French officials have advised they wish to start moving foreign nationals out of New Caledonia yesterday (Tuesday 21 May).
- The French High Commissioner statement last night included that "Republican order here will be re-established whatever the cost". He said that the authorities had regained control of the road between Noumea and the International Airport. Around 60 roadblocks had been dismantled, but the clean-up and repair operation would last several days. Due to this, the authorities assess that the road will not be useable until the weekend (i.e. Saturday 25 May) at the earliest.
- The High Commissioner also called on those with weapons to hand them in and warned of

the potential consequences should they be used against trained French security forces.

- While the situation appears to be stabilising, violence and clashes with security forces continue. Revised damage assessments estimate the cost at around XPF 40 billion (approximately NZ\$590 million). An estimated 2,000 jobs have also been impacted.
- The Ministry has organised transportation to support movement of people from hotels to airports. <sup>s6(a)</sup>  
This will likely be needed for assisted departure flights or when commercial options reopen.
- There are still outer suburbs of Noumea that remain largely inaccessible, including by police forces who are generally the target of the violence. A “demining” exercise would need to be carried out before the safety of the roads could be guaranteed.
- The 6pm to 6am curfew will remain in force for the full duration of the state of emergency. This curfew covers the entire territory of New Caledonia. The local government has announced that schools will be closed next week.
- French reinforcements were focused on restoring freedom of movement by removing barricades and hazards; restocking supermarkets and pharmacies, and ensuring the efficient movement of supplies around New Caledonia; and supporting the function of health services, ensuring access was available to those in need.
- French officials confirmed last night that New Caledonia has sufficient provisions of food and medicine, including additional supplies that have arrived in the port. Ministry officials have confirmed that supermarkets are being restocked with some food items.
- 20 shops have reopened and the New Caledonian Government have said many of the shops will be restocked Monday 20 May.

#### *New Zealand's response*

- The Minister of Foreign Affairs this afternoon (22 May 2024) held bilateral calls with the Prime Ministers of Tonga and Fiji this evening, as members of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Troika, to discuss the evolving situation in New Caledonia. MFA shared an update on [Twitter/X](#) of these calls.
- Minister Peters shared an update on [Twitter/X](#) with pictures of those leaving New Caledonia yesterday and urging all New Zealanders in Noumea to register on SafeTravel.
- Minister Peters put out a [press release](#) announcing the assisted departure flight, and also [posted on twitter/X](#), "[We were pleased 48 NZers arrived back from New Caledonia on a NZ Government plane into Auckland last night. We are working with France & Australia on a further flight today to bring another group of Kiwis in New Caledonia home via Brisbane, using French & NZ aircraft.](#)
- 48 New Zealanders were repatriated to Auckland via the NZDF C-130 flight yesterday (Tuesday 21 May). Officials continue to work with French authorities regarding subsequent flights.
- A New Zealand Immigration Liaison Officer has been deployed to Noumea on the first repatriation flight and will remain in country to manage immigration screening requirements across the duration of the response.
- <sup>s6(a)</sup>

MFAT officials understand that this may be the case until airports open and commercial flights resume, lessening the need for assisted departures (note: the next Air New Zealand scheduled flight is Saturday 25 May). <sup>s6(a)</sup>

s6(a)

- s6(a)
- s6(a)
- MFA spoke with Pacific Islands Forum Chair Prime Minister Mark Brown at 3:30pm Saturday 18 May. The discussion included New Zealand's desire to work with Pacific partners to help calm the situation down, and the role of the PIF to facilitate dialogue and promote de-escalation in the region. Officials are also exploring calls for MFA with the Prime Ministers of Fiji and Tonga.
- A planned protest took place in front of the French Embassy in Wellington from 12pm – 1:30pm Wednesday 22 May, in support of Kanak people in New Caledonia. Around 50 people took part in the peaceful protest, which included around 10 speeches, "Kanak resistance" songs and chants in Te Reo Māori. New Zealand Police deployed four officers to monitor the protest and ensure the security of the Embassy. New Zealand media were present at the protest (RNZ).

#### *Consular*

- We are aware of around 225 New Zealanders remaining in New Caledonia that wish to depart. New Zealanders are urged to keep their SafeTravel Registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their 'departure date' is updated.
- MFAT has upgraded SafeTravel alert level to Level 3 (out of 4) for the whole of New Caledonia "**Avoid non-essential travel**" in New Caledonia due to ongoing civil unrest.
- Post and Consular Call Centre staff continue to conduct welfare checks on Kiwis in New Caledonia. Since the unrest erupted, Ministry officials have met with over 100 Kiwis at hotels to discuss updates and answer questions. A Ministry official and a representative of Air New Zealand have met with Kiwis at two Noumea hotels. Approximately 60 people were present.
- s9(2)(ba)(i)

#### *Diplomatic outreach*

- New Zealand has formal consular obligations to Switzerland, Netherlands, and Samoa.  
s6(a)
- s6(a)
- s6(a), s6(b)(i)

- s6(a), s6(b)(i)

### *Staff welfare*

- MFAT staff in Noumea are all reported safe and well. MFAT head office is in regular contact and has deployed two additional staff to provide surge assistance in the coming days (should air travel allow).
- s9(2)(a)

### *Contacts*

- The MFAT Emergency Coordination Centre will operate from 8am-8pm daily and through the weekend. Please direct emails to:
  - Incident controller [Noumea.Controller@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.Controller@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Response manager [Noumea.ResponseManager@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.ResponseManager@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Consular response manager [Noumea.ConsularRM@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.ConsularRM@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Intel [Noumea.Intel@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.Intel@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Ministerial liaison [Noumea.MinLiaison@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.MinLiaison@mfat.govt.nz)

### Media comments by other Leaders

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- President Emmanuel Macron "noted clear progress in restoring order" following his convening of the third national security and defence council meeting overnight (Tuesday 21 May).
- New Caledonian representative in the French National Assembly Nicolas Metzdorf<sup>s6(a)</sup> returned to New Caledonia last night on board a French military plane. In a radio interview on Monday 20 May, Metzdorf labelled the CCAT a "terrorist organisation" and also criticised the state for not being prepared for the current situation. Metzdorf also stated his view that the legislative process to open the electoral roll had to continue; if not it would be giving in to the CCAT, and would mean that their actions had been successful.
- President Macron strongly condemned the "inacceptable violence, destruction, intimidation and assaults against persons, property and law enforcement agents" that has taken place in New Caledonia for the past three days. Macron has sent an invitation by way of a letter, to New Caledonia's politicians, for a meeting in Paris.
- French Prime Minister Gabriel Attal, "Everything is being done to restore order and calm that Caledonians deserve," after a meeting at the presidential palace on Wednesday. He said the situation "remains very tense, with looting, riots, arson and attacks, which are unbearable and unspeakable". Speaking before the National Assembly on Tuesday, underlined the opportunity for those talks to resume and called on New Caledonia's parties to "seize the opportunity of this extended hand" to resume dialogue. "Only dialogue will allow us to appease tensions. Our hand remains extended. We need an inclusive political solution that can satisfy all stakeholders and that's why we are offering New Caledonian leaders to discuss and build together the future of New Caledonia", he told Parliament during question time.
- On Friday CCAT (an independence political party) issued a statement calling for "a time of

calm to break the spiral of violence". The CCAT issued a new communiqué at midday on Friday. "In the face of the State's stubborn determination to impose constitutional change, we denounce the State's irresponsibility and hold it responsible for the loss of human life, the atrocities and the devastation of the country's economic fabric." The CCAT says it is deeply affected by the loss of these lives, "those of our young people murdered by militias backed by the State and non-independence leaders, and that of the young gendarme". In this press release, the cell coordinating field actions calls for appeasement. "A time for appeasement to halt the escalation of violence." He added: "It's a break in our fight. It expresses the CCAT's determination to preserve life. We're keeping up the pressure through our presence at phase 2.5 on the ground, maintaining filtering traffic for all citizens."

- Roch Wamytan, President of the Congress of New Caledonia said "The context" is not favourable to "discussions with the President of the Republic", after the cancellation of the videoconference proposed to Caledonian elected representatives by Emmanuel Macron. "How can you discuss with the President of the Republic under these conditions?" he continued. "We accepted the principle of discussions, except that to be able to meet the President of the Republic and listen to what he had to say to us, it was normal to prepare in advance. For me, it wasn't possible to do that today."
- French Justice Minister Eric Dupond-Moretti has called on prosecutors to "take the strongest possible action against the perpetrators of the violence" and also indicated he was considering transferring the "criminals" to mainland France.
- French Home Affairs and Overseas minister Gérald Darmanin told public TV channel France 2 he had placed 10 leaders of the CCAT (an organisation linked with FLNKS) under home detention. "This is a Mafia-like body which I do not amalgamate with political pro-independence parties...[CCAT] is a group that claims itself to be pro-independence and commits looting, murders and violence." "I have numerous elements which show this is a Mafia-like, violent organisation that loots stores and shoots real bullets at (French) gendarmes, sets businesses on fire and attacks even pro-independence institutions." "Massive reinforcements were to arrive shortly and the French state would "totally regain control", he said.
- The National Council of Chiefs of the Indigenous Kanak condemned "all acts of vandalism and gun violence", but rejected the allegations that the pro-independence movement was involved in the deadly violence. Grand Chief Hippolyte Sinewami-Htamumu expressed full support for the pro-independence group, which has mobilised more than a hundred thousand people "of all ages and from all backgrounds" in peaceful protests in recent months in the capital, Nouméa, and throughout the island. "This is not a 'terrorist group' or 'mafia group', as certain political leaders want us to believe."
- Romuald Pidjo, from the CCAT's [a pro-independence political group] Kanak delegation in Paris, on the anger of young people in Nouméa's working-class neighbourhoods [where some of the worst violence has taken place]. "These are people who are very disadvantaged, people who have been left behind. And what do they see, all these people, every day? They see people who've come from mainland France, who have big cars. And they have nothing! The straw that broke the camel's back was this constitutional bill in which the state is going to say: 'We're going to continue to bring in people who are going to crush you, who are going to take everything in this country'."
- Leaders of a Kanak Workers Union in Paris appealed for calm and said they were deeply saddened by deaths in their faraway homeland. "We wish to see the French government make a strong political statement rather than send troops," union leader Rock Haocas told reporters. "Starting a conversation would be a strong political statement."
- Cook Islands Prime Minister Mark Brown [and outgoing PIF Chair] said greater autonomy for the indigenous Kanak population is needed. "If there's one thing that specific countries

value, it is the sovereignty and independence. To be able to have control over the destiny of your own country." "My initial view of the unrest that's occurring in Caledonia, it is cause to recognise greater autonomy and greater independence from the people on those islands. "As a member of the Forum now, we will be able to provide support assistance to these member countries as to the best way forward without trying to try to avoid any escalation of conflict."

- Henry Puna, outgoing secretary-general of the Pacific Islands Forum told journalists at his final news conference that "to see the collapse [and], protesting is very unfortunate", but it was predictable. He said the issue "has been boiling" since the 2021 independence referendum in the French territory, the third and final vote under the Nouméa Accord, which was boycotted by the pro-indigenous Kanak population. He said he was there in December 2021 to monitor the independence referendum when it was taken and "it was unfortunate that it was allowed to go ahead during that time". "We were in the middle of [the] Covid [pandemic] and the Kanak custom is that when somebody passes they mourn that for one year. So they weren't allowed that freedom. "As a result, they didn't want to take part in the referendum because they couldn't go against their tradition and go campaigning or do other work. That's disrespectful for the custom."
- Vanuatu's prime minister, Charlot Salwai (also chairman of the Melanesian Spearhead Group, which also includes Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands) said the indiscriminate destruction of property would affect New Caledonia's economy in a big way and have a cascading effect on the lives of all New Caledonians, including Kanaks. He said France should establish dialogue with FLNKS, which has condemned the violence, and annul the constitutional reform that sparked the crisis. "These events could have been avoided if the French government had listened."
- French High Commissioner in Noumea Louis Le Franc said in a televised news conference the protesters were causing a "dire situation" for medicine and food for the population. He said main and secondary roads in Noumea were blocked by barricades with burning cars and car carcasses, some with booby traps.
- Australia's foreign affairs minister, Penny Wong, said Australians were advised to reconsider their need to travel to New Caledonia due to "civil unrest, travel disruption and limited essential services". "Again I repeat and take this opportunity to repeat Australia's call for calm. We respect and support the referendum process ... and the discussions under way between all parties, and encourage all parties to work together cooperatively to shape the future of New Caledonia."
- Labour Party Deputy Leader Carmel Sepuloni said the growing unrest was a concern. At last year's Pacific Islands Forum, French Polynesian representatives were already expressing concern about how some policies from the French government might affect its indigenous population, she said.



**From:** [Noumea.Intel](#)  
**To:** [NOUMEA; PACPE; DCE; ...PACIFIC POSTS; DS AAG; DS EMA; DS MLG; AUS; EUR; ISED; SORD Security; CON; PARIS; FM.P/S MFA \(Seemail\); FM.P/S Associate MFA \(Seemail\); FM.Defence \(Seemail\); FM.DPMC \(FPA\) \(Seemail\); FM.Police \(Seemail\); s6\(a\) FM.Police \(Seemail\); FM.Customs Service \(Seemail\); PACMM; PACREG; PHM; DEVVP; DEVECO; ...EUROPEAN POSTS; SAPD; PRD@mfat.govt.nz; AMD GARVEN, Heather \(AMD\); Noumea.ResponseManager; Noumea.Controller; Noumea.MinLiaison; Noumea.ConsularRM; Noumea.AssistedDepartures; Noumea.Logistics; Noumea.Planning; Noumea.Intel; "SCMU@dpmc.govt.nz"; "fiona.dally@mbie.govt.nz"; "chris.shaw@mbie.govt.nz"; "mike.hill@caa.govt.nz"; "Ben.king@dpmc.govt.nz"; ...YEOMANS, Sally \(Inet\); ...YEOMANS, Sally \(Inet\); ...YEOMANS, Sally \(Inet\); ...YEOMANS, Sally \(Inet\); ...YEOMANS, Sally \(Inet\); "Vanessa.berry@customs.govt.nz"; "sean.bolton@dpmc.govt.nz"; "Cherie.bliithe@dpmc.govt.nz"; "c.vandermeulen@transport.govt.nz"; KANE, Jared \(PEP\); KANE, Jared \(PEP\); "Chris.Scahill@TeWhatuOra.govt.nz"; "Michael.inglis@mpi.govt.nz"; "sarah.tuihalangie@mpi.govt.nz"; "zubair.ali@mpi.govt.nz"; "Miguel.Navarro@mpi.govt.nz"; "Julian.Grey@dpmc.govt.nz"; "noc@mpi.govt.nz"; "SUE.EDEN@nzdf.mil.nz"; "David.Williams@nzdf.mil.nz"; LAW, Anna \(PRD\); LAW, Anna \(PRD\); BARRINGTON, Svar \(PACREG\); BARRINGTON, Svar \(PACREG\); PETERS, Sonya \(CMD\); PETERS, Sonya \(CMD\); FM.Immigration NZ \(Seemail\); "kathleen.pearce@defence.govt.nz"; "MODPacific@defence.govt.nz"](#)  
**Subject:** FORMAL MESSAGE: SITREP 18: New Caledonia Unrest - Thursday 23 May  
**Date:** Thursday, 23 May 2024 11:28:00 am

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## Executive Summary SitRep 18: New Caledonia Unrest – Thursday 23 May

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### Key media messages

- New Zealand is deeply concerned about the political unrest in New Caledonia and we call for calm and dialogue to prevail.
- The safety of New Zealanders in New Caledonia is an urgent priority for us. We are aware of around 205 New Zealanders remaining in New Caledonia that wish to depart.
- 50 passengers arrived on an NZDF flight from Brisbane to Auckland at 2.15am this morning. These passengers had travelled from Nouméa to Brisbane on a French-operated flight.
- There will not be a French operated flight today, but planning is under way for potential flights tomorrow.
- Our consular team, working with Australia, is focused today on moving New Zealanders in other parts of New Caledonia into Nouméa to be ready for departure home on the next flights out.
- Seats on these flights were prioritised based on two considerations – urgent needs and the ability for passengers to safely travel to central pick-up points in Noumea
- Based on our current information, we are hopeful that all passengers with prioritised needs who can safely travel to pick-up points will be able to depart on the next available flights.
- We are working hard with France and Australia to ensure that further assisted departure flights can operate in the coming days.
- We have asked those registered with us on SafeTravel to let us know if they wish to express their interest in any potential further flight options.
- *[If asked about the specifics of the potential NZDF deployment]:* We are not able to share details on specifics at this stage.

s9(2)(g)(i)

### Assisted Departures

- A further 50 people were repatriated back to Auckland in the early hours of this morning.

A French military aircraft transported them from Noumea to Brisbane, where they were met by a NZDF aircraft, which returned them to Auckland. 48 passengers were repatriated on Tuesday's NZDF-operated flight out of Noumea direct to Auckland.

- MBIE Temporary Accommodation Service provided accommodation support overnight to a family of five who arrived on **this** morning's early flight, as they **did** not already have accommodation arranged in Auckland. The MFAT consular team on the flight from Brisbane to Auckland managed down the number requiring MBIE temporary accommodation support from 12 passengers to five passengers.
- French authorities have told us that today's (Thursday 23 May) proposed departure will not go ahead <sup>s6(a)</sup>
- s6(a)
- s6(a)

One key consideration is the ability of Auckland Airport to replicate refuelling services provided at Brisbane Airport, for which we have in-principle agreement from Auckland Airport.

- **We continue to lobby for alternative assisted departure options as well, utilising NZDF assets.**

#### *In Noumea*

- The death toll from the unrest currently sits at six people.
- **French President Emmanuel Macron has arrived in New Caledonia**, accompanied by the French Minister for the Interior [Darmanin] and Overseas, the French Defence Minister [Lecornu], and the **Minister Delegate for Overseas France [Guévenoux]**. While in Noumea, the President intends to meet with local representatives to discuss the evolving situation.
- President Macron convened a third national security and defence council meeting in the early hours of Tuesday 21 May NZ time. The council announced that Tontouta Airport will remain closed to commercial flights until Thursday 23 May with more military personnel brought in to protect government buildings. **We have not received any further update on this, but are proceeding on the basis that commercial flights will not resume today.**
- While the situation appears to be stabilising, violence and clashes with security forces continue. Damage assessments estimate the cost at around XPF 40 billion (approximately NZ\$590 million). An estimated 2,000 jobs have also been impacted.

#### *New Zealand's response*

- **This morning, the Minister of Foreign Affairs posted on [Twitter/X](#) expressing frustration at the lack of approval for flights today. This post has been shared with main NZ media.**
- **The Minister of Foreign Affairs held bilateral calls with the Prime Ministers of Tonga and Fiji yesterday evening**, as members of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Troika, to discuss the evolving situation in New Caledonia. MFA shared an update on [Twitter/X](#) of these calls.
- Minister Peters put out a [press release](#) announcing the assisted departure flight, and also [posted on Twitter/X](#). He shared an update on [Twitter/X](#) with pictures of those leaving New Caledonia yesterday and urging all New Zealanders in Noumea to register on SafeTravel. Minister Peters also spoke with [Checkpoint](#) and [Newstalk ZB](#) on Tuesday 21 May.

- A planned protest took place in front of the French Embassy in Wellington from 12pm – 1:30pm Wednesday 22 May, in support of Kanak people in New Caledonia. Around 50 people took part in the peaceful protest, which included around 10 speeches, “Kanak resistance” songs and chants in Te Reo Māori. New Zealand Police deployed officers to monitor the protest and ensure the security of the Embassy. New Zealand media were present at the protest (RNZ).

### **Consular response**

- We are aware of around 205 New Zealanders remaining in New Caledonia who wish to depart. New Zealanders in New Caledonia are urged to register on SafeTravel and keep their registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their ‘departure date’ is updated.
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia should stay in place and avoid all protests, monitor local media for developments, and comply with any instructions and restrictions issued by local authorities.
- NZ Consulate General and Consular Call Centre staff continue to conduct welfare checks on New Zealanders in New Caledonia. Since the unrest erupted, Ministry officials have met with over 100 New Zealanders at hotels to relay updates and answer questions, and will continue to do so.
- New Zealand’s current travel alert level for all of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential travel** (Level 3 of 4). This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.

## ANNEX: Full SitRep 18: New Caledonia Unrest – Thursday 23 May

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### Key media messages

#### *Political situation*

- New Zealand is deeply concerned about the political unrest in New Caledonia and we call for calm and dialogue to prevail.
- The safety of New Zealanders in New Caledonia is an urgent priority for us. We are aware of around 205 New Zealanders remaining in New Caledonia.
- 50 passengers arrived on an NZDF flight from Brisbane to Auckland at 2.15am this morning. These passengers had travelled from Nouméa to Brisbane on a French-operated flight.
- There will not be a French-operated flight today, but planning is under way for potential flights tomorrow.
- Our consular team, working with Australia, is focused today on moving New Zealanders in other parts of New Caledonia into Nouméa to be ready for departure home on the next flights out.
- Seats on these flights were prioritised based on two considerations – urgent needs and the ability for passengers to safely travel to central pick-up points in Noumea
- Based on our current information, we are hopeful that all passengers with prioritised needs who can safely travel to pick-up points will be able to depart on the next available flights.
- We are working hard with France and Australia to ensure that further flights can operate in the coming days.
- *[If asked about other foreign nationals on the NZDF flight]:* A small number of seats were

also offered to other nationals with urgent needs.

- We have asked those registered with us on SafeTravel to let us know if they wish to express their interest in any potential further flight options.
- *[If asked about transport on the ground/road access to airports, etc.]:* We continue to work with relevant authorities on the ground to understand security and access issues, including for travel to airports in Noumea.
- *[If raised: independence of New Caledonia]* The question of independence is one for the people of New Caledonia to decide with France. We acknowledge that the political and economic situation in New Caledonia is challenging and reiterate calls on all Parties to find a solution. We hope that peace and calm will prevail.
- s6(a) The immediate priority must be for all sides to take steps to de-escalate the situation, so that there can be dialogue and calm. No matter your views on the political arrangements in New Caledonia, everyone should agree that violence is harmful to every community there.
- *[If raised: PIF Members and Secretariat comments on crisis]* The Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) is the region's pre-eminent political entity and it is understandable that Forum Members and the PIF Secretariat are following developments in New Caledonia closely. We recognise and share the concern felt among Forum Members at the recent violence. We engage in a consistent manner with all Forum Members, including New Caledonia, on PIF matters and put high value on the centrality and unity of the PIF. It is for individual countries to make their own assessments on the situation in New Caledonia. New Zealand has been very clear on the need for all sides to take steps to de-escalate, so that there can be dialogue and calm.
- s6(a)

#### *Consular response*

- We are aware of 205 New Zealanders remaining in New Caledonia who wish to depart.
- New Zealanders are urged to keep their SafeTravel Registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their 'departure date' is updated.
- New Zealanders in need of immediate consular assistance should contact the 24/7 Consular Emergency line on +64 99 20 20 20.
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia should stay in place and avoid all protests, monitor local media for developments, and comply with any instructions and restrictions issued by local authorities.
- Post and Consular Call Centre staff continue to conduct welfare checks on New Zealanders in New Caledonia. Since the unrest erupted, MFAT officials in Noumea have met with over 100 Kiwis at hotels to discuss updates and answer questions.
- Officials are regularly speaking with New Caledonian authorities regarding airport operations and access, and ongoing needs in relation to critical supplies such as food and medicine.
- At present, with the Tontouta international airport remaining closed to commercial flights, there is no safe way to leave New Caledonia.
- New Zealand's current travel alert level for all of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential travel** (Level 3 of 4). This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.

- We recommend that all travellers remain in contact with their airline for any updates on flight bookings. Travellers should also contact their travel insurance provider if travel has been disrupted.
- *[If asked why the NZ Consulate in Noumea is closed]* Due to the State of Emergency in New Caledonia, and the security requirement to stay home/in place, New Zealand Consulate staff are working remotely. Callers to the Consulate are being directed to New Zealand's 24/7 Consular Emergency line.

## Latest developments

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### **Key developments**

#### *Assisted Departures*

- A further 50 people were repatriated back to Auckland in the early hours of this morning. A French military aircraft transported them from Noumea to Brisbane, where they were met by a NZDF aircraft, which returned them to Auckland. 48 passengers were repatriated on Tuesday's NZDF-operated flight out of Noumea direct to Auckland.

- s9(2)(a)

The MFAT consular team on the flight from Brisbane to Auckland managed down the number requiring MBIE temporary accommodation support from 12 passengers to five passengers.

- s6(a)

- s6(a)

- s6(a)

One key consideration is the ability of Auckland Airport to replicate refuelling services provided at Brisbane Airport, for which we have in-principle agreement from Auckland Airport.

- Minister Peters put out a [press release](#) announcing the assisted departure flight, and also posted on [twitter/X](#). Minister Peters also spoke with [Checkpoint](#) and [Newstalk ZB](#) yesterday evening [Tuesday 21 May].
- A New Zealand Immigration Liaison Officer from MBIE will remain in-country to manage immigration screening throughout the duration of the response. There are also ten NZDF logistical support staff now in Noumea working with the New Zealand Consulate General and deployed MFAT Consular team on arrangements for assisted departures.
- **In parallel to the New Zealand assisted departure flights**, the French approved the assisted departure of Australian nationals via two Australian C-130 flights from Magenta on Tuesday 21 May. [Australia's Senator Wong](#) also posted to confirm the Australian flights. Australia's Senator Wong has posted on [Twitter/X](#) to confirm work with French authorities for further flights.

*In Noumea*

- There are some [reports](#) of protesters erecting new barricades overnight in what was described as a 'cat and mouse' game with French police reinforcements ahead of President Macron's arrival. [Journalists](#) have highlighted that the composition of President Macron's delegation could further anger pro-independence leader and fuel further unrest.
- One person has been killed and two more injured in an exchange of gunfire on Saturday 18 May as they tried to pass a barricade near Kaala-Gomen. This brings the death toll to six, including 2 gendarmes and 3 Kanak. A body was also found in Noumea harbour – the circumstances of this death are not yet clear and may be unrelated.
- **French President Emmanuel Macron has arrived in New Caledonia**, accompanied by the French Minister for the Interior [Darmanin] and Overseas, the French Defence Minister [Lecornu], and the **Minister Delegate for Overseas France [Guévenoux]**. While in Noumea, the President intends to meet with local representatives to discuss the evolving situation.
- President Macron convened a third national security and defence council meeting in the early hours of Tuesday 21 May NZ time. The council announced that Tontouta Airport will remain closed to commercial flights until Thursday 23 May with more military personnel brought in to protect government buildings. **We have not received any further update on this, but are proceeding on the basis that commercial flights will not resume today.**
- President Macron noted clear progress in restoring order and that "All measures are being taken to enable tourists still present in the archipelago to return home". French officials have advised they wish to start moving foreign nationals out of New Caledonia yesterday (Tuesday 21 May).
- The French High Commissioner's statement **on Tuesday** included that "Republican order here will be re-established whatever the cost". He said that the authorities had regained control of the road between Noumea and the International Airport. Around 60 roadblocks had been dismantled, but the clean-up and repair operation would last several days. Due to this, the authorities assess that the road will not be useable until the weekend (i.e. Saturday 25 May) at the earliest.
- The High Commissioner also called on those with weapons to hand them in and warned of the potential consequences should they be used against trained French security forces.
- While the situation appears to be stabilising, violence and clashes with security forces continue. Revised damage assessments estimate the cost at around XPF 40 billion (approximately NZ\$590 million). An estimated 2,000 jobs have also been impacted.
- There are still outer suburbs of Noumea that remain largely inaccessible, including by police forces who are generally the target of the violence. A "demining" exercise would need to be carried out before the safety of the roads could be guaranteed. **The Ministry, working with French authorities, has organised transportation to support the safe movement of people from hotels to airports for assisted departures.**
- The 6pm to 6am curfew will remain in force for the full duration of the state of emergency. This curfew covers the entire territory of New Caledonia. The local government has announced that schools will be closed next week.
- French reinforcements were focused on restoring freedom of movement by removing barricades and hazards; restocking supermarkets and pharmacies, and ensuring the efficient movement of supplies around New Caledonia; and supporting the function of health services, ensuring access was available to those in need.
- French officials confirmed last night that New Caledonia has sufficient provisions of food and medicine, including additional supplies that have arrived in the port. Ministry officials have confirmed that supermarkets are being restocked with some food items.

- 20 shops have reopened and the New Caledonian Government have said many of the shops will be restocked Monday 20 May.

#### *New Zealand's response*

- This morning, the Minister of Foreign Affairs posted on [Twitter/X](#) expressing frustration at the lack of approval for flights today. This post has been shared with main NZ media.
- Officials in Wellington, Noumea and Paris continue to work with New Caledonian and French authorities to push for the safe and speedy repatriation of those New Zealanders wishing to return from New Caledonia.
- The Minister of Foreign Affairs **yesterday** held bilateral calls with the Prime Ministers of Tonga and Fiji evening, as members of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Troika, to discuss the evolving situation in New Caledonia. MFA shared an update on [Twitter/X](#) of these calls.
- The Minister spoke with Pacific Islands Forum Chair Prime Minister Mark Brown at 3:30pm Saturday 18 May. The discussion included New Zealand's desire to work with Pacific partners to help calm the situation down, and the role of the PIF to facilitate dialogue and promote de-escalation in the region. Officials are also exploring calls for MFA with the Prime Ministers of Fiji and Tonga.
- Officials continue to work closely with Australia to ensure our responses are calibrated. Minister Peters held a trilateral call with the Foreign Ministers of France and Australia on Monday 20 May, reiterating the request for access for repatriation flights.
- s6(a)
- Following the announcement of the first repatriation flight Minister Peters put out a [press release](#) announcing the assisted departure flight, and also [posted on twitter/X](#). He also shared an update on [Twitter/X](#) with pictures of those leaving New Caledonia yesterday and urging all New Zealanders in Noumea to register on SafeTravel.
- A planned protest took place in front of the French Embassy in Wellington from 12pm – 1:30pm Wednesday 22 May. Around 50 people took part in the peaceful protest, and included around 10 speeches, “Kanaky resistance” songs and chants in Te Reo Māori. Journalists from RNZ were present. In addition to French security, 3 local police officers were deployed and a liaison office to supervise the demonstration. The protestors warned there might be “other actions” but did not expand on what these might be.

#### *Consular*

- We are aware of around **205** New Zealanders remaining in New Caledonia who wish to depart. New Zealanders are urged to keep their SafeTravel Registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their ‘departure date’ is updated.
- MFAT has upgraded SafeTravel alert level to Level 3 (out of 4) for the whole of New Caledonia **“Avoid non-essential travel”** in New Caledonia due to ongoing civil unrest.
- Post and Consular Call Centre staff continue to conduct welfare checks on Kiwis in New Caledonia. Since the unrest erupted, Ministry officials have met with over 100 Kiwis at hotels to discuss updates and answer questions.
- s9(2)(ba)(i)

### *Diplomatic outreach*

- New Zealand has formal consular obligations to Switzerland, Netherlands, and Samoa. s6(a)
- s6(a)
- s6(a), s6(b)(i)
- s6(a), s6(b)(i)

### *Staff welfare*

- MFAT staff in Noumea are all reported safe and well. MFAT head office is in regular contact and has deployed two additional staff to provide surge assistance.
- s9(2)(a)

### *Contacts*

- The MFAT Emergency Coordination Centre will operate from 8am-8pm daily and through the weekend. Please direct emails to:
  - Incident controller [Noumea.Controller@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.Controller@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Response manager [Noumea.ResponseManager@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.ResponseManager@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Consular response manager [Noumea.ConsularRM@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.ConsularRM@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Intel [Noumea.Intel@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.Intel@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Ministerial liaison [Noumea.MinLiaison@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.MinLiaison@mfat.govt.nz)

### Media comments by other Leaders

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- Cook Islands Prime Minister Mark Brown noted on RNZ Morning Report this morning [Thursday 23 May] the political unrest is 'deeply concerning to the [Pacific Island] Forum family'. The PIF call is for 'peace and order to prevail so that we can actually engage in genuine dialogue and through the Pacific way of talanoa.' Full interview [here](#).
- President Emmanuel Macron "noted clear progress in restoring order" following his convening of the third national security and defence council meeting overnight (Tuesday 21 May).
- New Caledonian representative in the French National Assembly Nicolas Metzdorf s6(a) returned to New Caledonia last night on board a French military plane. In a radio interview on Monday 20 May, Metzdorf labelled the CCAT a "terrorist organisation" and also criticised the state for not being prepared for the current situation. Metzdorf also stated his view that the legislative process to open the electoral roll had to continue; if not it would be giving in to the CCAT, and would mean that their actions had been successful.



- President Macron strongly condemned the "inacceptable violence, destruction, intimidation and assaults against persons, property and law enforcement agents" that has taken place in New Caledonia for the past three days. Macron has sent an invitation by way of a letter, to New Caledonia's politicians, for a meeting in Paris.
- French Prime Minister Gabriel Attal, "Everything is being done to restore order and calm that Caledonians deserve," after a meeting at the presidential palace on Wednesday. He said the situation "remains very tense, with looting, riots, arson and attacks, which are unbearable and unspeakable". Speaking before the National Assembly on Tuesday, underlined the opportunity for those talks to resume and called on New Caledonia's parties to "seize the opportunity of this extended hand" to resume dialogue. "Only dialogue will allow us to appease tensions. Our hand remains extended. We need an inclusive political solution that can satisfy all stakeholders and that's why we are offering New Caledonian leaders to discuss and build together the future of New Caledonia", he told Parliament during question time.
- On Friday CCAT (an independence political party) issued a statement calling for "a time of calm to break the spiral of violence". The CCAT issued a new communiqué at midday on Friday. "In the face of the State's stubborn determination to impose constitutional change, we denounce the State's irresponsibility and hold it responsible for the loss of human life, the atrocities and the devastation of the country's economic fabric." The CCAT says it is deeply affected by the loss of these lives, "those of our young people murdered by militias backed by the State and non-independence leaders, and that of the young gendarme". In this press release, the cell coordinating field actions calls for appeasement. "A time for appeasement to halt the escalation of violence." He added: "It's a break in our fight. It expresses the CCAT's determination to preserve life. We're keeping up the pressure through our presence at phase 2.5 on the ground, maintaining filtering traffic for all citizens."
- Roch Wamytan, President of the Congress of New Caledonia said "The context" is not favourable to "discussions with the President of the Republic", after the cancellation of the videoconference proposed to Caledonian elected representatives by Emmanuel Macron. "How can you discuss with the President of the Republic under these conditions?" he continued. "We accepted the principle of discussions, except that to be able to meet the President of the Republic and listen to what he had to say to us, it was normal to prepare in advance. For me, it wasn't possible to do that today."
- French Justice Minister Eric Dupond-Moretti has called on prosecutors to "take the strongest possible action against the perpetrators of the violence" and also indicated he was considering transferring the "criminals" to mainland France.
- French Home Affairs and Overseas minister Gérald Darmanin told public TV channel France 2 he had placed 10 leaders of the CCAT (an organisation linked with FLNKS) under home detention. "This is a Mafia-like body which I do not amalgamate with political pro-independence parties...[CCAT] is a group that claims itself to be pro-independence and commits looting, murders and violence," "I have numerous elements which show this is a Mafia-like, violent organisation that loots stores and shoots real bullets at (French) gendarmes, sets businesses on fire and attacks even pro-independence institutions." "Massive reinforcements were to arrive shortly and the French state would "totally regain control", he said.
- The National Council of Chiefs of the Indigenous Kanak condemned "all acts of vandalism and gun violence", but rejected the allegations that the pro-independence movement was involved in the deadly violence. Grand Chief Hippolyte Sinewami-Htamumu expressed full support for the pro-independence group, which has mobilised more than a hundred thousand people "of all ages and from all backgrounds" in peaceful protests in recent months in the capital, Nouméa, and throughout the island. "This is not a 'terrorist group'

or 'mafia group', as certain political leaders want us to believe."

- Romuald Pidjo, from the CCAT's [a pro-independence political group] Kanak delegation in Paris, on the anger of young people in Nouméa's working-class neighbourhoods [where some of the worst violence has taken place]. "These are people who are very disadvantaged, people who have been left behind. And what do they see, all these people, every day? They see people who've come from mainland France, who have big cars. And they have nothing! The straw that broke the camel's back was this constitutional bill in which the state is going to say: 'We're going to continue to bring in people who are going to crush you, who are going to take everything in this country'."
- Leaders of a Kanak Workers Union in Paris appealed for calm and said they were deeply saddened by deaths in their faraway homeland. "We wish to see the French government make a strong political statement rather than send troops," union leader Rock Haocas told reporters. "Starting a conversation would be a strong political statement."
- Cook Islands Prime Minister Mark Brown [and outgoing PIF Chair] said greater autonomy for the indigenous Kanak population is needed. "If there's one thing that specific countries value, it is the sovereignty and independence. To be able to have control over the destiny of your own country." "My initial view of the unrest that's occurring in Caledonia, it is cause to recognise greater autonomy and greater independence from the people on those islands. "As a member of the Forum now, we will be able to provide support assistance to these member countries as to the best way forward without trying to try to avoid any escalation of conflict."
- Henry Puna, outgoing secretary-general of the Pacific Islands Forum told journalists at his final news conference that "to see the collapse [and], protesting is very unfortunate", but it was predictable. He said the issue "has been boiling" since the 2021 independence referendum in the French territory, the third and final vote under the Nouméa Accord, which was boycotted by the pro-indigenous Kanak population. He said he was there in December 2021 to monitor the independence referendum when it was taken and "it was unfortunate that it was allowed to go ahead during that time". "We were in the middle of [the] Covid [pandemic] and the Kanak custom is that when somebody passes they mourn that for one year. So they weren't allowed that freedom. "As a result, they didn't want to take part in the referendum because they couldn't go against their tradition and go campaigning or do other work. That's disrespectful for the custom."
- Vanuatu's prime minister, Charlot Salwai (also chairman of the Melanesian Spearhead Group, which also includes Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands) said the indiscriminate destruction of property would affect New Caledonia's economy in a big way and have a cascading effect on the lives of all New Caledonians, including Kanaks. He said France should establish dialogue with FLNKS, which has condemned the violence, and annul the constitutional reform that sparked the crisis. "These events could have been avoided if the French government had listened."
- French High Commissioner in Noumea Louis Le Franc said in a televised news conference the protesters were causing a "dire situation" for medicine and food for the population. He said main and secondary roads in Noumea were blocked by barricades with burning cars and car carcasses, some with booby traps.
- Australia's foreign affairs minister, Penny Wong, said Australians were advised to reconsider their need to travel to New Caledonia due to "civil unrest, travel disruption and limited essential services". "Again I repeat and take this opportunity to repeat Australia's call for calm. We respect and support the referendum process ... and the discussions under way between all parties, and encourage all parties to work together cooperatively to shape the future of New Caledonia."
- Labour Party Deputy Leader Carmel Sepuloni said the growing unrest was a concern. At

last year's Pacific Islands Forum, French Polynesian representatives were already expressing concern about how some policies from the French government might affect its indigenous population, she said.

Released under the Official Information Act

**From:** [Noumea.Intel](#)  
**To:** [NOUMEA; PACPE; DCE; ...PACIFIC POSTS; DS AAG; DS EMA; DS MLG; AUS; EUR; ISED; SORD Security; CON; PARIS; FM.P/S MFA \(Seemail\); FM.P/S Associate MFA \(Seemail\); FM.Defence \(Seemail\); FM.DPMC \(FPA\) \(Seemail\); FM.Police \(Seemail\); s6\(a\) FM.Police \(Seemail\); FM.Customs Service \(Seemail\); PACMM; PACREG; PHM; DEVVP; DEVECO; ...EUROPEAN POSTS; SAPD; PRD; AMD](#)  
**Cc:** [GARVEN, Heather \(AMD\); Noumea.ResponseManager; Noumea.Controller; Noumea.MinLiaison; Noumea.ConsularRM; Noumea.AssistedDepartures; Noumea.Logistics; Noumea.Planning; Noumea.Intel; "SCMU@dpmc.govt.nz"; "fiona.dally@mbie.govt.nz"; "chris.shaw@mbie.govt.nz"; "mike.hill@caa.govt.nz"; "Ben.king@dpmc.govt.nz"; ...YEOMANS, Sally \(Inet\); ...YEOMANS, Sally \(Inet\); ...YEOMANS, Sally \(Inet\); ...YEOMANS, Sally \(Inet\); ...YEOMANS, Sally \(Inet\); "Vanessa.berry@customs.govt.nz"; "sean.bolton@dpmc.govt.nz"; "Cherie.bliithe@dpmc.govt.nz"; "c.vandermeulen@transport.govt.nz"; KANE, Jared \(PEP\); KANE, Jared \(PEP\); "Chris.Scahill@TeWhatuOra.govt.nz"; "Michael.inglis@mpi.govt.nz"; "sarah.tuihalangie@mpi.govt.nz"; "zubair.ali@mpi.govt.nz"; "Miguel.Navarro@mpi.govt.nz"; "Julian.Grey@dpmc.govt.nz"; "noc@mpi.govt.nz"; "SUE.EDEN@nzdf.mil.nz"; "David.Williams@nzdf.mil.nz"; LAW, Anna \(PRD\); BARRINGTON, Svar \(PACREG\); PETERS, Sonya \(CMD\); FM.Immigration.NZ \(Seemail\); "kathleen.pearce@defence.govt.nz"; "MODPacific@defence.govt.nz"](#)  
**Subject:** FORMAL MESSAGE: SITREP 19: New Caledonia Unrest - Thursday 23 May  
**Date:** Thursday, 23 May 2024 7:15:21 pm

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[RESTRICTED]

## Executive Summary SitRep 19: New Caledonia Unrest – Thursday 23 May

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### Key media messages

- New Zealand is deeply concerned about the political unrest in New Caledonia, and we call for calm and dialogue to prevail.
- The safety of New Zealanders in New Caledonia is an urgent priority for us. We are aware of around 205 New Zealanders remaining in New Caledonia that wish to depart.
- 50 passengers arrived on an NZDF flight from Brisbane to Auckland at 2.15am this morning. These passengers had travelled from Nouméa to Brisbane on a French-operated flight.
- Two government flights have now arrived in New Zealand carrying stranded travellers from Nouméa. Seats on these flights were prioritised based on two considerations – urgent needs and the ability for passengers to safely travel to central pick-up points in Nouméa.
- There will be no French-operated flight today, but we are working hard with France and Australia on potential flights for tomorrow.
- Our consular team, working with Australia, is focused today on moving New Zealanders in other parts of New Caledonia into Nouméa to be ready for departure home on the next flights out.
- Based on our current information, we are hopeful that all passengers with prioritised needs who can safely travel to pick-up points will be able to depart on the next available flights.
- We have asked those registered on SafeTravel to let us know their interest in any potential further flight options.
- *[If asked about French approvals to fly today]:* Unfortunately, we have not received approvals from France for any flights today. We appreciate this will be frustrating for New Zealanders waiting to come home.
- *[If asked about potential flights for tomorrow]:* There was no French-operated flight today, but we are working hard with France and Australia on potential flights for tomorrow.
- *[If asked about individual cases in the media]:* We are unable to comment on individual cases, but we are hopeful that all passengers with prioritised needs who can safely travel

to pick-up points will be able to depart on the next available flights.

s9(2)(g)(i)

#### *Assisted Departures*

- A further 50 people were repatriated back to Auckland in the early hours of this morning. A French military aircraft transported them from Nouméa to Brisbane, where they were met by a NZDF aircraft, which returned them to Auckland. 48 passengers were repatriated on Tuesday's NZDF-operated flight out of Nouméa direct to Auckland.
- French authorities have told us that today's proposed flight (Thursday 23 May) would not go ahead. s6(a)
- Officials are working with the French authorities on a proposal which would allow for two flights to depart Noumea in the coming days, carrying approximately 125 passengers total. This would include: 1) a NZDF-operated C-130 daytime departure from Magenta airport on Friday afternoon, travelling direct to Auckland; and 2) a French-operated MRTT early Saturday morning departure from Tontouta Airport to Brisbane, which would be met by an NZDF 757 for onwards transport to Auckland. Passengers on the flight to Brisbane would likely be transported to Tontouta airport by shuttle flights between Magenta and Tontouta.
- s6(a)

One key consideration is the ability of Auckland Airport to replicate refuelling services provided at Brisbane Airport, for which we have in-principle agreement from Auckland Airport.

- s6(a)
- We are also exploring further NZDF C-130 flights on both Saturday 25 and Sunday 26 May, subject to French approvals. Both flights would travel between Magenta and Auckland International Airport, and be able to carry up to 50 passengers.

#### *In Nouméa*

- The death toll from the unrest currently sits at six people.
- French President Emmanuel Macron has arrived in New Caledonia, accompanied by the French Minister for the Interior Darmanin, the French Defence Minister Lecornu, and the Minister Delegate for Overseas France Guévenoux. While in Nouméa, the President intends to meet with local representatives to discuss the evolving situation.
- We have received indications s6(a) that La Tontouta Airport may reopen for commercial flights from Saturday or Sunday, but it is too early to tell if this timeframe will play out in practice.
- While the situation appears to be stabilising, violence and clashes with security forces continue. Damage assessments estimate the cost at around XPF 40 billion (approximately NZ\$590 million). An estimated 2,000 jobs have also been impacted.

#### *New Zealand's response*

- This morning (Thursday 23 May), the Minister of Foreign Affairs posted on [Twitter/X](#)

expressing frustration at the lack of approval for flights today. This post has been reported by [NZ media](#). Cook Islands Prime Minister Mark Brown noted on [RNZ Morning Report](#) this morning (Thursday 23 May) the political unrest is 'deeply concerning to the [Pacific Islands] Forum family'.

- The Minister of Foreign Affairs held bilateral calls with the Prime Ministers of Tonga and Fiji yesterday evening (Wednesday 22 May), as members of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Troika, to discuss the evolving situation in New Caledonia. MFA shared an update on [Twitter/X](#) of these calls.
- Minister Peters put out a [press release](#) announcing the assisted departure flight, and also [posted on Twitter/X](#). He shared an update on [Twitter/X](#) with pictures of those leaving New Caledonia on Tuesday's assisted departure flight. Minister Peters also spoke with [Checkpoint](#) and [Newstalk ZB](#) on Tuesday 21 May following the flight leaving Nouméa.
- A planned protest took place in front of the French Embassy in Wellington from 12pm – 1:30pm Wednesday 22 May, in support of Kanak people in New Caledonia. Around 50 people took part in the peaceful protest, which included around 10 speeches, "Kanak resistance" songs and chants in Te Reo Māori. New Zealand Police deployed officers to monitor the protest and ensure the security of the Embassy. New Zealand media were present at the protest (RNZ).

### **Consular response**

- We are aware of around 205 New Zealanders remaining in New Caledonia who wish to depart. New Zealanders in New Caledonia are urged to register on SafeTravel and keep their registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their 'departure date' is updated.
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia should stay in place and avoid all protests, monitor local media for developments, and comply with any instructions and restrictions issued by local authorities.
- The NZ Consulate General and Consular Call Centre staff continue to conduct welfare checks on New Zealanders in New Caledonia.
- New Zealand's current travel advisory for all of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential travel** (Level 3 of 4). This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.

## ANNEX: Full SitRep 19: New Caledonia Unrest – Thursday 23 May

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### **Key media messages**

- New Zealand is deeply concerned about the political unrest in New Caledonia, and we call for calm and dialogue to prevail.
- The safety of New Zealanders in New Caledonia is an urgent priority for us. We are aware of around 205 New Zealanders remaining in New Caledonia.
- 50 passengers arrived on an NZDF flight from Brisbane to Auckland at 2.15am this morning. These passengers had travelled from Nouméa to Brisbane on a French-operated flight.
- Two government flights have now arrived in New Zealand carrying stranded travellers from Nouméa. Seats on these flights were prioritised based on two considerations – urgent needs and the ability for passengers to safely travel to central pick-up points in Nouméa.
- There will be no French-operated flight today, but we are working hard with France and

Australia on potential flights for tomorrow.

- Our consular team, working with Australia, is focused today on moving New Zealanders in other parts of New Caledonia into Nouméa to be ready for departure home on the next flights out.
- Based on our current information, we are hopeful that all passengers with prioritised needs who can safely travel to pick-up points will be able to depart on the next available flights.
- We have asked those registered on SafeTravel to let us know their interest in any potential further flight options.
- *[If asked about French approvals to fly today]:* Unfortunately, we have not received approvals from France for any flights today. We appreciate this will be frustrating for New Zealanders waiting to come home.
- *[If asked about potential flights for tomorrow]:* There was no French-operated flight today, but we are working hard with France and Australia on potential flights for tomorrow.
- *[If asked about individual cases in the media]:* We are unable to comment on individual cases, but we are hopeful that all passengers with prioritised needs who can safely travel to pick-up points will be able to depart on the next available flights.
- *[If asked about other foreign nationals on NZDF flight]:* A small number of seats were also offered to other nationals with urgent needs.
- *[If asked about transport on the ground/road access to airports, etc.]:* We continue to work with relevant authorities on the ground to understand security and access issues, including for travel to airports in Nouméa.
- *[If raised: independence of New Caledonia]* The question of independence is one for the people of New Caledonia to decide with France. We acknowledge that the political and economic situation in New Caledonia is challenging and reiterate calls on all Parties to find a solution. We hope that peace and calm will prevail.
- s6(a) The immediate priority must be for all sides to take steps to de-escalate the situation, so that there can be dialogue and calm. No matter your views on the political arrangements in New Caledonia, everyone should agree that violence is harmful to every community there.
- *[If raised: PIF comments on crisis]* We recognise and share the concern felt among Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) members at the recent violence. It is for individual countries to make their own assessments on the situation in New Caledonia. New Zealand has been very clear on the need for all sides to take steps to de-escalate, so that there can be dialogue and calm.
- s6(a)
- *[If asked about the specifics of the potential NZDF deployments]:* We are not able to share details on specifics at this stage.

#### Consular response

- New Zealanders are urged to keep their SafeTravel Registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their 'departure date' is updated.
- New Zealanders in need of immediate consular assistance should contact the 24/7 Consular Emergency line on +64 99 20 20 20.

- New Zealanders in New Caledonia should stay in place and avoid all protests, monitor local media for developments, and comply with any instructions and restrictions issued by local authorities.
- Our staff in Wellington and Nouméa continue to conduct welfare checks on New Zealanders in New Caledonia.
- Officials are regularly speaking with New Caledonian authorities regarding airport operations and access, and ongoing needs in relation to critical supplies such as food and medicine.
- New Zealand's current travel advisory for all of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential travel** (Level 3 of 4). This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.
- We recommend that all travellers remain in contact with their airline for any updates on flight bookings. Travellers should also contact their travel insurance provider if travel has been disrupted.
- *[If asked why the NZ Consulate in Nouméa is closed]* Due to the State of Emergency in New Caledonia, New Zealand Consulate staff are working remotely. Callers to the Consulate are being directed to New Zealand's 24/7 Consular Emergency line.

## Latest developments

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s9(2)(g)(i)

### *Assisted Departures*

- s6(a)  
rench authorities told us that today's proposed flight (Thursday 23 May) would not go ahead. s6(a)
- s6(a)
- Officials are working with the French authorities on a proposal which would allow for two flights to depart Noumea in the coming days, carrying approximately 125 passengers total. This would include: 1) a NZDF-operated C-130 daytime departure from Magenta airport on Friday afternoon, travelling direct to Auckland; and 2) a French-operated MRTT early Saturday morning departure from Tontouta Airport to Brisbane, which would be met by an NZDF 757 for onwards transport to Auckland. Passengers on the flight to Brisbane would likely be transported to Tontouta airport by shuttle flights between Magenta and Tontouta.
- s6(a)

One key consideration is the ability of Auckland Airport to replicate refuelling services provided at Brisbane Airport, for which we have in-principle agreement from Auckland Airport.

- s6(a)
- We are also exploring further NZDF C-130 flights on both Saturday 25 and Sunday 26 May,



subject to French approvals. Both flights would travel between Magenta and Auckland International Airport, and be able to carry up to 50 passengers.

- A further 50 people were repatriated back to Auckland in the early hours of this morning. A French military aircraft transported them from Nouméa to Brisbane, where they were met by a NZDF aircraft, which returned them to Auckland. 48 passengers were repatriated on Tuesday's NZDF-operated flight out of Nouméa direct to Auckland.
- In the two assisted departure flights so far, <sup>s6(a)</sup>
- MBIE Temporary Accommodation Service provided accommodation support overnight to a family of five who arrived on this morning's early flight, as they did not already have accommodation arranged in Auckland. The MFAT consular team on the flight from Brisbane to Auckland managed down the number requiring MBIE temporary accommodation support from 12 passengers to five passengers.
- This morning (Thursday 23 May), the Minister of Foreign Affairs posted on [Twitter/X](#) expressing frustration at the lack of approval for flights today. This post has been reported by [NZ media](#).
- Minister Peters put out a [press release](#) announcing the assisted departure flight on Tuesday 21 May, and also [posted on Twitter/X](#). He shared an update on [Twitter/X](#) with pictures of those leaving New Caledonia on Tuesday's assisted departure flight. Minister Peters also spoke with [Checkpoint](#) and [Newstalk ZB](#) on Tuesday 21 May following the flight leaving Nouméa.
- A New Zealand Immigration Liaison Officer from MBIE will remain in-country to manage immigration screening throughout the duration of the response. There are also ten NZDF logistical support staff now in Nouméa working with the New Zealand Consulate General and deployed MFAT Consular team on arrangements for assisted departures.
- In parallel to the New Zealand assisted departure flights, the French approved the assisted departure of Australian nationals via two Australian C-130 flights from Magenta on Tuesday 21 May. [Australia's Senator Wong](#) also posted to confirm the Australian flights. Australia's Senator Wong has posted on [Twitter/X](#) to confirm work with French authorities for further flights.

#### *In Nouméa*

- There are some [reports](#) of protesters erecting new barricades last night in what was described as a 'cat and mouse' game with French police reinforcements ahead of President Macron's arrival. [Journalists](#) have highlighted that the composition of President Macron's delegation could further anger pro-independence leader and fuel further unrest.
- One person has been killed and two more injured in an exchange of gunfire on Saturday 18 May as they tried to pass a barricade near Kaala-Gomen. This brings the death toll to six, including 2 gendarmes and 3 Kanak. A body was also found in Nouméa harbour – the circumstances of this death are not yet clear and may be unrelated.
- We have received indications <sup>s6(a)</sup> La Tontouta Airport may reopen for commercial flights from Saturday or Sunday, but it is too early to tell if this timeframe will play out in practice. We understand that Aircalin has been asked to assist with repatriation flights. They have scheduled flights between New Zealand and New Caledonia on Saturday and Sunday.

- French President Emmanuel Macron touched down in Nouméa at around 8.30am local time this morning, accompanied by Minister of the Interior Gérald Darmanin, Associate Minister of Overseas Territories Marie Guévenoux, and Minister for the Armed Forces Sébastien Lecornu.
- Exact details of the President's programme are not known, but he has met with New Caledonian elected officials this morning and is expected to meet with representatives of the business community as well, given the significant economic impact of the civil unrest.
- The Minister of the Interior and the Minister of the Armed Forces will meet with the internal security forces. The Associate Minister for Overseas Territories will hold a specific meeting on reconstruction.
- President Macron has insisted on the need for "frank, direct, open debate on institutional and project issues". He said: "We need to bring all stakeholders to the table. Appeasement cannot mean going backwards. The objective is to have a free and confidential debate between us. I'm counting on everyone's sense of responsibility. We will succeed, because New Caledonia deserves it". [Macron hinted](#) that the emergency status could be lifted in the coming days, saying: "I personally believe that the state of emergency should not be extended."
- s6(a)
- s6(a)
- s6(a)
- Other pro-independence politicians were cautiously positive and were keen to see the start of a dialogue mission. s6(a)
- President Macron noted clear progress in restoring order and that "All measures are being taken to enable tourists still present in the archipelago to return home."
- The French High Commissioner's statement on Tuesday included that "Republican order here will be re-established whatever the cost". He said that the authorities had regained control of the road between Nouméa and the International Airport. Around 60 roadblocks had been dismantled, but the clean-up and repair operation would last several days. Due to this, the authorities assess that the road will not be useable until the weekend (i.e. Saturday 25 May) at the earliest.

- The High Commissioner also called on those with weapons to hand them in and warned of the potential consequences should they be used against trained French security forces.
- While the situation appears to be stabilising, violence and clashes with security forces continue. Revised damage assessments estimate the cost at around XPF 40 billion (approximately NZ\$590 million). An estimated 2,000 jobs have also been impacted.
- The 6pm to 6am curfew will remain in force for the full duration of the state of emergency. This curfew covers the entire territory of New Caledonia. The local government has announced that schools will be closed next week.
- French reinforcements were focused on restoring freedom of movement by removing barricades and hazards; restocking supermarkets and pharmacies, and ensuring the efficient movement of supplies around New Caledonia; and supporting the function of health services, ensuring access was available to those in need.
- French officials confirmed last night that New Caledonia has sufficient provisions of food and medicine, including additional supplies that have arrived in the port. Ministry officials have confirmed that supermarkets are being restocked with some food items.
- 20 shops have reopened and the New Caledonian Government have said many of the shops will be restocked Monday 20 May.

#### *New Zealand's response*

- This morning (Thursday 23 May), the Minister of Foreign Affairs posted on [Twitter/X](#) expressing frustration at the lack of approval for flights today. This post has been shared with main NZ media.
- Officials in Wellington, Nouméa and Paris continue to work with New Caledonian and French authorities to push for the safe and speedy repatriation of those New Zealanders wishing to return from New Caledonia.
- s6(b)(i)
- The Minister of Foreign Affairs yesterday held bilateral calls with the Prime Ministers of Tonga and Fiji, as members of the Pacific Islands Forum Troika to discuss the evolving situation in New Caledonia. MFA shared an update on [Twitter/X](#) of these calls.
- The Minister spoke with Pacific Islands Forum Chair Prime Minister Mark Brown at 3:30pm Saturday 18 May. The discussion included New Zealand's desire to work with Pacific partners to help calm the situation down, and the role of the PIF to facilitate dialogue and promote de-escalation in the region.
- Officials continue to work closely with Australia to ensure our responses are lined up. Minister Peters held a trilateral call with the Foreign Ministers of France and Australia on Monday 20 May, reiterating the request for access for repatriation flights.
- Following the announcement of the first repatriation flight Minister Peters put out a [press release](#) announcing the assisted departure flight, and also [posted on twitter/X](#). He also shared an update on [Twitter/X](#) with pictures of those leaving New Caledonia and urging all New Zealanders in Nouméa to register on SafeTravel.
- A planned protest took place in front of the French Embassy in Wellington from 12pm – 1:30pm Wednesday 22 May. Around 50 people took part in the peaceful protest, and included around 10 speeches, “Kanaky resistance” songs and chants in Te Reo Māori. Journalists from RNZ were present as well as some Members of Parliament. In addition to

French security, 3 local police officers were deployed and a liaison office to supervise the demonstration. The protestors warned there might be “other actions” but did not expand on what these might be.

#### *Consular*

- We are aware of around 205 New Zealanders remaining in New Caledonia who wish to depart. New Zealanders are urged to keep their SafeTravel Registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their ‘departure date’ is updated.
- MFAT has upgraded SafeTravel advisory to Level 3 (out of 4) for the whole of New Caledonia **“Avoid non-essential travel”** in New Caledonia due to ongoing civil unrest.
- Post and Consular Call Centre staff continue to conduct welfare checks on Kiwis in New Caledonia.

#### *Diplomatic outreach*

- New Zealand has formal consular obligations to Switzerland, Netherlands, and Samoa.  
s6(a)
- s6(a)
- s6(a), s6(b)(i)

#### *Staff welfare*

- MFAT staff in Nouméa are all reported safe and well.
- s9(2)(a)

#### *Contacts*

- The MFAT Emergency Coordination Centre will operate from 8am-8pm daily and through the weekend. Please direct emails to:
  - Incident controller [Nouméa.Controller@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Nouméa.Controller@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Response manager [Nouméa.ResponseManager@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Nouméa.ResponseManager@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Consular response manager [Nouméa.ConsularRM@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Nouméa.ConsularRM@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Intel [Nouméa.Intel@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Nouméa.Intel@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Ministerial liaison [Nouméa.MinLiaison@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Nouméa.MinLiaison@mfat.govt.nz)

#### Media comments by other Leaders

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- **International media have started to report more on the situation in New Caledonia. Outlets including BBC, CNN and Al Jazeera have covered our first assisted departure flight, alongside Australia’s own efforts.**
- Cook Islands Prime Minister Mark Brown noted on RNZ Morning Report this morning (Thursday 23 May) the political unrest is 'deeply concerning to the [Pacific Islands] Forum family'. The PIF call is for 'peace and order to prevail so that we can actually engage in genuine dialogue and through the Pacific way of talanoa.' Full interview [here](#).
- President Emmanuel Macron “noted clear progress in restoring order” following his

convening of the third national security and defence council meeting overnight (Tuesday 21 May).

- New Caledonian representative in the French National Assembly Nicolas Metzdorf<sup>s6(a)</sup> returned to New Caledonia last night on board a French military plane. In a radio interview on Monday 20 May, Metzdorf labelled the CCAT a "terrorist organisation" and also criticised the state for not being prepared for the current situation. Metzdorf also stated his view that the legislative process to open the electoral roll had to continue; if not it would be giving in to the CCAT, and would mean that their actions had been successful.
- President Macron strongly condemned the "inacceptable violence, destruction, intimidation and assaults against persons, property and law enforcement agents" that has taken place in New Caledonia for the past three days. Macron has sent an invitation by way of a letter, to New Caledonia's politicians, for a meeting in Paris.
- French Prime Minister Gabriel Attal, "Everything is being done to restore order and calm that Caledonians deserve," after a meeting at the presidential palace on Wednesday. He said the situation "remains very tense, with looting, riots, arson and attacks, which are unbearable and unspeakable". Speaking before the National Assembly on Tuesday, underlined the opportunity for those talks to resume and called on New Caledonia's parties to "seize the opportunity of this extended hand" to resume dialogue. "Only dialogue will allow us to appease tensions. Our hand remains extended. We need an inclusive political solution that can satisfy all stakeholders and that's why we are offering New Caledonian leaders to discuss and build together the future of New Caledonia", he told Parliament during question time.
- On Friday CCAT (an independence political party) issued a statement calling for "a time of calm to break the spiral of violence". The CCAT issued a new communiqué at midday on Friday. "In the face of the State's stubborn determination to impose constitutional change, we denounce the State's irresponsibility and hold it responsible for the loss of human life, the atrocities and the devastation of the country's economic fabric." The CCAT says it is deeply affected by the loss of these lives, "those of our young people murdered by militias backed by the State and non-independence leaders, and that of the young gendarme". In this press release, the cell coordinating field actions calls for appeasement. "A time for appeasement to halt the escalation of violence." He added: "It's a break in our fight. It expresses the CCAT's determination to preserve life. We're keeping up the pressure through our presence at phase 2.5 on the ground, maintaining filtering traffic for all citizens."
- Roch Wamytan, President of the Congress of New Caledonia said "The context" is not favourable to "discussions with the President of the Republic", after the cancellation of the videoconference proposed to Caledonian elected representatives by Emmanuel Macron. "How can you discuss with the President of the Republic under these conditions?" he continued. "We accepted the principle of discussions, except that to be able to meet the President of the Republic and listen to what he had to say to us, it was normal to prepare in advance. For me, it wasn't possible to do that today."
- French Justice Minister Eric Dupond-Moretti has called on prosecutors to "take the strongest possible action against the perpetrators of the violence" and also indicated he was considering transferring the "criminals" to mainland France.
- French Home Affairs and Overseas minister Gérald Darmanin told public TV channel France 2 he had placed 10 leaders of the CCAT (an organisation linked with FLNKS) under home detention. "This is a Mafia-like body which I do not amalgamate with political pro-independence parties...[CCAT] is a group that claims itself to be pro-independence and commits looting, murders and violence," "I have numerous elements which show this is a Mafia-like, violent organisation that loots stores and shoots real bullets at (French)

gendarmes, sets businesses on fire and attacks even pro-independence institutions." "Massive reinforcements were to arrive shortly and the French state would "totally regain control", he said.

- The National Council of Chiefs of the Indigenous Kanak condemned "all acts of vandalism and gun violence", but rejected the allegations that the pro-independence movement was involved in the deadly violence. Grand Chief Hippolyte Sinewami-Htamumu expressed full support for the pro-independence group, which has mobilised more than a hundred thousand people "of all ages and from all backgrounds" in peaceful protests in recent months in the capital, Nouméa, and throughout the island. "This is not a 'terrorist group' or 'mafia group', as certain political leaders want us to believe."
- Romuald Pidjo, from the CCAT's [a pro-independence political group] Kanak delegation in Paris, on the anger of young people in Nouméa's working-class neighbourhoods [where some of the worst violence has taken place]. "These are people who are very disadvantaged, people who have been left behind. And what do they see, all these people, every day? They see people who've come from mainland France, who have big cars. And they have nothing! The straw that broke the camel's back was this constitutional bill in which the state is going to say: 'We're going to continue to bring in people who are going to crush you, who are going to take everything in this country'."
- Leaders of a Kanak Workers Union in Paris appealed for calm and said they were deeply saddened by deaths in their faraway homeland. "We wish to see the French government make a strong political statement rather than send troops," union leader Rock Haocas told reporters. "Starting a conversation would be a strong political statement."
- Cook Islands Prime Minister Mark Brown (and outgoing PIF Chair said greater autonomy for the indigenous Kanak population is needed. "If there's one thing that specific countries value, it is the sovereignty and independence. To be able to have control over the destiny of your own country." "My initial view of the unrest that's occurring in Caledonia, it is cause to recognise greater autonomy and greater independence from the people on those islands. "As a member of the Forum now, we will be able to provide support assistance to these member countries as to the best way forward without trying to try to avoid any escalation of conflict."
- Henry Puna, outgoing secretary-general of the Pacific Islands Forum told journalists at his final news conference that "to see the collapse [and], protesting is very unfortunate", but it was predictable. He said the issue "has been boiling" since the 2021 independence referendum in the French territory, the third and final vote under the Nouméa Accord, which was boycotted by the pro-indigenous Kanak population. He said he was there in December 2021 to monitor the independence referendum when it was taken and "it was unfortunate that it was allowed to go ahead during that time". "We were in the middle of [the] Covid [pandemic] and the Kanak custom is that when somebody passes they mourn that for one year. So they weren't allowed that freedom. "As a result, they didn't want to take part in the referendum because they couldn't go against their tradition and go campaigning or do other work. That's disrespectful for the custom."
- Vanuatu's prime minister, Charlot Salwai (also chairman of the Melanesian Spearhead Group, which also includes Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands) said the indiscriminate destruction of property would affect New Caledonia's economy in a big way and have a cascading effect on the lives of all New Caledonians, including Kanaks. He said France should establish dialogue with FLNKS, which has condemned the violence, and annul the constitutional reform that sparked the crisis. "These events could have been avoided if the French government had listened."
- French High Commissioner in Nouméa Louis Le Franc said in a televised news conference the protesters were causing a "dire situation" for medicine and food for the population. He said main and secondary roads in Nouméa were blocked by barricades with burning cars

and car carcasses, some with booby traps.

- Australia's foreign affairs minister, Penny Wong, said Australians were advised to reconsider their need to travel to New Caledonia due to "civil unrest, travel disruption and limited essential services". "Again I repeat and take this opportunity to repeat Australia's call for calm. We respect and support the referendum process ... and the discussions under way between all parties, and encourage all parties to work together cooperatively to shape the future of New Caledonia."
- Labour Party Deputy Leader Carmel Sepuloni said the growing unrest was a concern. At last year's Pacific Islands Forum, French Polynesian representatives were already expressing concern about how some policies from the French government might affect its indigenous population, she said.

Released under the Official Information Act

**From:** [Noumea.Intel](#)  
**To:** [NOUMEA; PACPE; DCE; ...PACIFIC POSTS; DS AAG; DS EMA; DS MLG; AUS; EUR; ISED; SORD Security; CON; PARIS; FM.P/S MFA \(Seemail\); FM.P/S Associate MFA \(Seemail\); FM.Defence \(Seemail\); FM.DPMC \(FPA\) \(Seemail\); FM.Police \(Seemail\); s6\(a\) FM.Police \(Seemail\); FM.Customs Service \(Seemail\); PACMM; PACREG; PHM; DEVPP; DEVECO; ...EUROPEAN POSTS; SAPD; PRD; AMD](#)  
**Cc:** [GARVEN, Heather \(AMD\); Noumea.ResponseManager; Noumea.Controller; Noumea.MinLiaison; Noumea.ConsularRM; Noumea.AssistedDepartures; Noumea.Logistics; Noumea.Planning; Noumea.Intel; "SCMU@dpmc.govt.nz"; "fiona.dally@mbie.govt.nz"; "chris.shaw@mbie.govt.nz"; "mike.hill@caa.govt.nz"; "Ben.king@dpmc.govt.nz"; ...YEOMANS, Sally \(Inet\); ...YEOMANS, Sally \(Inet\); ...YEOMANS, Sally \(Inet\); ...YEOMANS, Sally \(Inet\); ...YEOMANS, Sally \(Inet\); "Vanessa.berry@customs.govt.nz"; "sean.bolton@dpmc.govt.nz"; "Cherie.bliithe@dpmc.govt.nz"; "c.vandermeulen@transport.govt.nz"; KANE, Jared \(PEP\); KANE, Jared \(PEP\); "Chris.Scahill@TeWhatuOra.govt.nz"; "Michael.inglis@mpi.govt.nz"; "sarah.tuihalangie@mpi.govt.nz"; "zubair.ali@mpi.govt.nz"; "Miguel.Navarro@mpi.govt.nz"; "Julian.Grey@dpmc.govt.nz"; "noc@mpi.govt.nz"; "SUE.EDEN@nzdf.mil.nz"; "David.Williams@nzdf.mil.nz"; LAW, Anna \(PRD\); LAW, Anna \(PRD\); BARRINGTON, Svar \(PACREG\); BARRINGTON, Svar \(PACREG\); PETERS, Sonya \(CMD\); PETERS, Sonya \(CMD\); FM.Immigration NZ \(Seemail\); "kathleen.pearce@defence.govt.nz"; "MODPacific@defence.govt.nz"](#)  
**Subject:** FORMAL MESSAGE: SITREP 20: NEW CALEDONIA UNREST - FRIDAY 24 MAY  
**Date:** Friday, 24 May 2024 11:04:53 am

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[RESTRICTED]

## Executive Summary SitRep 20: New Caledonia Unrest – Friday 24 May

### **Key media messages**

- New Zealand is deeply concerned about the political unrest in New Caledonia, and we call for calm and dialogue to prevail.
- The safety of New Zealanders in New Caledonia is an urgent priority for us.
- An NZDF flight has arrived in New Caledonia this morning. It is due to arrive in Auckland around 2:30pm with around 50 passengers on board.
- Following today's assisted departure, we are aware of around 160 New Zealanders remaining in New Caledonia who wish to depart.
- Today's flight will be the third government flight to arrive in New Zealand carrying travellers from New Caledonia. Seats on these flights were prioritised based on two considerations – urgent needs and the ability for passengers to safely travel to central pick-up points in Nouméa.
- Our consular team, continues to work with Australia on moving New Zealanders in other parts of New Caledonia into Nouméa to be ready for departure home on the next flights out.
- Based on our current information, we are hopeful that all passengers with prioritised needs who can safely travel to pick-up points will be able to depart on the next available flights.
- We have asked those registered on SafeTravel to let us know their interest in any potential further flight options.
- *[If asked about potential NZDF flights over the weekend]:* We are working hard with France and Australia on potential NZDF flights in coming days.
- *[If asked about individual cases in the media]:* We are unable to comment on individual cases, but we are hopeful that all passengers with prioritised needs who can safely travel to pick-up points will be able to depart on the next available flights.

s9(2)(g)(i)



### *Assisted Departures*

- A NZDF C-130 flight departed Whenuapai for Magenta airport this morning just before 6am, and landed in Magenta airport just before 10am NZT <sup>s6(a)</sup>
- On its return flight, the C-130 is expected to carry around 50 passengers, and arrive at Auckland International Airport at around 2.30pm today. In addition to New Zealanders, this flight will include <sup>s6(a)</sup>
- <sup>s6(a)</sup> French officials advised us that the planned French MRTT flight Noumea to Brisbane would not go ahead. The MRTT flight was scheduled to depart Noumea at 1.00am on Saturday local time, carrying approximately 100 New Zealand passengers as well as a similar number of Australian passengers. <sup>s6(a)</sup>
- Pending French clearances, current NZDF planning for this weekend involves:
  - Saturday 25 May: C-130 transports <sup>s6(a)</sup> French nationals to New Caledonia, and returns 50-55 New Zealanders to Auckland.
  - Sunday 26 May: C-130 transports <sup>s6(a)</sup> French nationals from Auckland to New Caledonia. The C-130 then does two trips from Noumea to Port Vila, Vanuatu transporting up to 60 passengers each time. These passengers (up to 120) will then be transported to Auckland by NZDF 757. This operation should be able to transport all remaining New Zealanders in New Caledonia back to New Zealand. We are exploring whether the 757 could support the repatriation of Vanuatu RSE workers from Auckland to Port Vila. A number of workers have not been able to return home to Vanuatu since Air Vanuatu entered liquidation.
  - Monday 27 May: A C-130 will be available to transport passengers from Noumea to Auckland, if required.
- 50 people were repatriated back to Auckland in the early hours of Thursday morning. A French military aircraft transported them from Nouméa to Brisbane, where they were met by a NZDF aircraft, which returned them to Auckland. 48 passengers were repatriated on Tuesday's NZDF-operated flight out of Nouméa direct to Auckland.
- French authorities told us that the Thursday 23 May proposed flight would not go ahead. <sup>s6(a)</sup>

### *In Nouméa*

- The death toll from the unrest currently sits at six people.
- French President Emmanuel Macron has arrived in New Caledonia, accompanied by the French Minister for the Interior Darmanin, the French Defence Minister Lecornu, and the Minister Delegate for Overseas France Guévenoux. While in Nouméa, the President intends to meet with local representatives to discuss the evolving situation.
- We have received indications from the French that La Tontouta Airport may reopen for commercial flights from Saturday or Sunday, but it is too early to tell if this timeframe will play out in practice.
- While the situation appears to be stabilising, violence and clashes with security forces continue. Damage assessments estimate the cost at around XPF 40 billion (approximately NZ\$590 million). An estimated 2,000 jobs have also been impacted.

### *In New Zealand*

- Yesterday morning (Thursday 23 May), the Minister of Foreign Affairs posted on [Twitter/X](#) expressing frustration at the lack of approval for flights. This post has been reported by [NZ media](#). Cook Islands Prime Minister Mark Brown noted on [RNZ Morning Report](#) yesterday morning (Thursday 23 May) the political unrest is 'deeply concerning to the [Pacific Islands] Forum family'.
- The Minister of Foreign Affairs held bilateral calls with the Prime Ministers of Tonga and Fiji on Wednesday 22 May, as members of the Pacific Islands Forum Troika, to discuss the evolving situation in New Caledonia. MFA shared an update on [Twitter/X](#) of these calls.
- Minister Peters put out a [press release](#) announcing the assisted departure flight, and also posted on [Twitter/X](#). He shared an update on [Twitter/X](#) with pictures of those leaving New Caledonia on Tuesday's assisted departure flight. Minister Peters also spoke with [Checkpoint](#) and [Newstalk ZB](#) on Tuesday 21 May following the flight leaving Nouméa.
- A planned protest took place in front of the French Embassy in Wellington from 12pm – 1:30pm Wednesday 22 May, in support of Kanak people in New Caledonia. Around 50 people took part in the peaceful protest, which included around 10 speeches, "Kanak resistance" songs and chants in Te Reo Māori. New Zealand Police deployed officers to monitor the protest and ensure the security of the Embassy. New Zealand media were present at the protest (RNZ).

### **Consular response**

- **Following today's assisted departure, we are aware of around 160 New Zealanders remaining in New Caledonia who wish to depart.**
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia are urged to register on SafeTravel and keep their registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their 'departure date' is updated.
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia should stay in place and avoid all protests, monitor local media for developments, and comply with any instructions and restrictions issued by local authorities.
- The NZ Consulate General and Consular Call Centre staff continue to conduct welfare checks on New Zealanders in New Caledonia.
- New Zealand's current travel advisory for all of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential travel** (Level 3 of 4). This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.

## ANNEX: Full SitRep 20: New Caledonia Unrest – Friday 24 May

### **Key media messages**

- New Zealand is deeply concerned about the political unrest in New Caledonia, and we call for calm and dialogue to prevail.
- The safety of New Zealanders in New Caledonia is an urgent priority for us.
- **An NZDF flight has arrived in New Caledonia this morning. It is due to arrive in Auckland around 2:30pm with around 50 passengers on board.**
- **Following today's assisted departure, we are aware of around 160 New Zealanders remaining in New Caledonia who wish to depart.**
- **Today's flight will be the third to** arrive in New Zealand carrying travellers from New Caledonia. Seats on these flights were prioritised based on two considerations – urgent needs and the ability for passengers to safely travel to central pick-up points in Nouméa.

- Our consular team continues to work with Australia on moving New Zealanders in other parts of New Caledonia into Nouméa to be ready for departure home on the next flights out.
- Based on our current information, we are hopeful that all passengers with prioritised needs who can safely travel to pick-up points will be able to depart on the next available flights.
- We have asked those registered on SafeTravel to let us know their interest in any potential further flight options. **They will be contacted directly as flights are scheduled.**
- *[If asked about potential NZDF flights over the weekend]:* We are working hard with France and Australia on potential NZDF flights **in the coming days.**
- *[If asked about French-operated flights]* There will be no French-operated flight today, but we are working hard with France and Australia on potential flights **in the coming days.**
- *[If asked about individual cases in the media]:* We are unable to comment on individual cases, but we are hopeful that all passengers with prioritised needs who can safely travel to pick-up points will be able to depart on the next available flights.
- *[If asked about other foreign nationals on NZDF flights]:* A small number of seats were also offered to other nationals with urgent needs.
- *[If asked about transport on the ground/road access to airports, etc.]:* We continue to work with relevant authorities on the ground to understand security and access issues, including for travel to airports in Nouméa.
- *[If raised: independence of New Caledonia]* The question of independence is one for the people of New Caledonia to decide with France. We acknowledge that the political and economic situation in New Caledonia is challenging and reiterate calls on all Parties to find a solution. We hope that peace and calm will prevail.
- s6(a) The immediate priority must be for all sides to take steps to de-escalate the situation, so that there can be dialogue and calm. No matter your views on the political arrangements in New Caledonia, everyone should agree that violence is harmful to every community there.
- *[If raised: PIF comments on crisis]* We recognise and share the concern felt among Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) members at the recent violence. It is for individual countries to make their own assessments on the situation in New Caledonia. New Zealand has been very clear on the need for all sides to take steps to de-escalate, so that there can be dialogue and calm.
- s6(a)
- *[If asked about the specifics of the potential NZDF deployments]:* We are not able to share details on specifics at this stage.

#### Consular response

- New Zealanders are urged to keep their SafeTravel Registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their 'departure date' is updated.
- New Zealanders in need of immediate consular assistance should contact the 24/7 Consular Emergency line on +64 99 20 20 20.
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia should stay in place and avoid all protests, monitor local media for developments, and comply with any instructions and restrictions issued by local authorities.

- Our staff in Wellington and Nouméa continue to conduct welfare checks on New Zealanders in New Caledonia.
- Officials are regularly speaking with New Caledonian authorities regarding airport operations and access, and ongoing needs in relation to critical supplies such as food and medicine.
- New Zealand's current travel advisory for all of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential travel** (Level 3 of 4). This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.
- We recommend that all travellers remain in contact with their airline for any updates on flight bookings. Travellers should also contact their travel insurance provider if travel has been disrupted.
- *[If asked why the NZ Consulate in Nouméa is closed]* Due to the State of Emergency in New Caledonia, the New Zealand Consulate office is closed. Callers to the Consulate are being directed to New Zealand's 24/7 Consular Emergency line. A consular team is working on the ground to support New Zealanders to depart New Caledonia.

## Latest developments

s9(2)(g)(i)

### *Assisted Departures*

- s6(a)
- A NZDF C-130 flight departed Whenuapai for Magenta airport this morning just before 6am, and landed in Magenta airport just before 10am NZT. s6(a)
- On its return, the C-130 is expected to carry around 50 passengers, and arrive at Auckland International Airport at around 2.30pm today. In addition to New Zealanders, this flight will include s6(a)
- s6(a) French officials advised us that the planned French MRTT flight Noumea to Brisbane would not go ahead. The MRTT flight was scheduled to depart Noumea at 1.00am on Saturday local time, carrying approximately 100 New Zealand passengers as well as a similar number of Australian passengers. s6(a)
- Pending French clearances, current NZDF planning for this weekend involves:
  - Saturday 25 May: C-130 transports s6(a) French nationals to New Caledonia, and returns 50-55 New Zealanders to Auckland.
  - Sunday 26 May: C-130 transports s6(a) French nationals from Auckland to New Caledonia. The C-130 then does two trips from Noumea to Port Vila, Vanuatu transporting up to 60 passengers each time. These passengers (up to 120) will then be transported to Auckland by NZDF 757. This operation should be able to transport all remaining New Zealanders in New Caledonia back to New Zealand. We are exploring whether the 757 could support the repatriation of Vanuatu RSE workers from Auckland to Port Vila. A number of workers have not been able to return home to Vanuatu since Air Vanuatu entered liquidation.

- Monday 27 May: A C-130 will be available to transport passengers from Noumea to Auckland, if required.

- s6(a)

e are continuing to lobby for additional flight options in Nouméa, Paris and Wellington.

- 50 people were repatriated back to Auckland in the early hours of yesterday morning. A French military aircraft transported them from Nouméa to Brisbane, where they were met by a NZDF aircraft, which returned them to Auckland. 48 passengers were repatriated on Tuesday's NZDF-operated flight out of Nouméa direct to Auckland.
- In the two assisted departure flights so far, s6(a)

travellers are subject to the same prioritisation process as other passengers (e.g. those with vulnerabilities will be prioritised). As New Zealand Passport holders, Cook Islanders are included in our planning for New Zealanders.

- MBIE Temporary Accommodation Service provided accommodation support overnight to a family of five who arrived on Thursday morning's early flight, as they did not already have accommodation arranged in Auckland. The MFAT consular team on the flight from Brisbane to Auckland managed down the number requiring MBIE temporary accommodation support from 12 passengers to five passengers.
- On Thursday 23 May, the Minister of Foreign Affairs posted on [Twitter/X](#) expressing frustration at the lack of approval for flights yesterday. This post has been reported by [NZ media](#).
- Minister Peters put out a [press release](#) announcing the assisted departure flight on Tuesday 21 May, and also [posted on Twitter/X](#). He shared an update on [Twitter/X](#) with pictures of those leaving New Caledonia on Tuesday's assisted departure flight. Minister Peters also spoke with [Checkpoint](#) and [Newstalk ZB](#) on Tuesday 21 May following the flight leaving Nouméa.
- s6(a)
- In parallel to the New Zealand assisted departure flights, the French approved the assisted departure of Australian nationals via two Australian C-130 flights from Magenta on Tuesday 21 May. [Australia's Senator Wong](#) also posted to confirm the Australian flights. Australia's Senator Wong has posted on [Twitter/X](#) to confirm work with French authorities for further flights.

#### *In Nouméa*

- There are some [reports](#) of protesters erecting new barricades last night in what was described as a 'cat and mouse' game with French police reinforcements ahead of President Macron's arrival. [Journalists](#) have highlighted that the composition of President Macron's delegation could further anger pro-independence leader and fuel further unrest.
- The death toll stands at six, including 2 gendarmes and 3 Kanak. A body was also found in Nouméa harbour – the circumstances of this death are not yet clear and may be unrelated.
- We have received indications from the French that La Tontouta Airport may reopen for commercial flights from Saturday or Sunday, but it is too early to tell if this timeframe will play out in practice. We understand that Aircalin has been asked to assist with repatriation flights. They have scheduled flights between New Zealand and New Caledonia on Saturday

and Sunday.

- French President Emmanuel Macron touched down in Nouméa at around 8.30am local time yesterday morning, accompanied by Minister of the Interior Gérald Darmanin, Associate Minister of Overseas Territories Marie Guévenoux, and Minister for the Armed Forces Sébastien Lecornu.
- Exact details of the President's programme are not known, but he met with New Caledonian elected officials yesterday and is expected to meet with representatives of the business community as well, given the significant economic impact of the civil unrest.
- The Minister of the Interior and the Minister of the Armed Forces will meet with the internal security forces. The Associate Minister for Overseas Territories will hold a specific meeting on reconstruction.
- President Macron has insisted on the need for "frank, direct, open debate on institutional and project issues". He said: "We need to bring all stakeholders to the table. Appeasement cannot mean going backwards. The objective is to have a free and confidential debate between us. I'm counting on everyone's sense of responsibility. We will succeed, because New Caledonia deserves it". [Macron hinted](#) that the emergency status could be lifted in the coming days, saying: "I personally believe that the state of emergency should not be extended."
- Reactions from local New Caledonia political figures are mixed. <sup>s6(a)</sup>  
Leading pro-France politician Sonia Backès said the visit was a strong sign of the President's personal commitment to the situation in New Caledonia.
- In the pro-independence camp, current President of the Congress Roch Wamytan called the visit "a show", noting that "the country is on fire and the President of the Republic shows up with two Ministers that we have had problems with in the past". He added that the only thing they wanted from Macron was a response to their request for the Bill proposing changes to the New Caledonian electoral roll be withdrawn.
- <sup>s6(a)</sup>
- Other pro-independence politicians were cautiously positive and were keen to see the start of a dialogue mission. <sup>s6(a)</sup>
- President Macron noted clear progress in restoring order and that "All measures are being taken to enable tourists still present in the archipelago to return home."
- While the situation appears to be stabilising, violence and clashes with security forces continue. Revised damage assessments estimate the cost at around XPF 40 billion (approximately NZ\$590 million). An estimated 2,000 jobs have also been impacted.
- The 6pm to 6am curfew will remain in force for the full duration of the state of emergency. This curfew covers the entire territory of New Caledonia.

- French reinforcements were focused on restoring freedom of movement by removing barricades and hazards; restocking supermarkets and pharmacies, and ensuring the efficient movement of supplies around New Caledonia; and supporting the function of health services, ensuring access was available to those in need.
- French officials confirmed last night that New Caledonia has sufficient provisions of food and medicine, including additional supplies that have arrived in the port. Ministry officials have confirmed that supermarkets are being restocked with some food items.

#### *New Zealand's response*

- Officials in Wellington, Nouméa and Paris continue to work with New Caledonian and French authorities to push for the safe and speedy repatriation of those New Zealanders wishing to return from New Caledonia.
- s6(a)
- The Minister of Foreign Affairs held bilateral calls with the Prime Ministers of Tonga and Fiji, as members of the Pacific Islands Forum Troika to discuss the evolving situation in New Caledonia. MFA shared an update on [Twitter/X](#) of these calls.
- The Minister spoke with Pacific Islands Forum Chair Prime Minister Mark Brown on Saturday 18 May. The discussion included New Zealand's desire to work with Pacific partners to help calm the situation down, and the role of the PIF to facilitate dialogue and promote de-escalation in the region.
- Officials continue to work closely with Australia to ensure our responses are lined up. Minister Peters held a trilateral call with the Foreign Ministers of France and Australia on Monday 20 May, reiterating the request for access for repatriation flights.
- Following the announcement of the first repatriation flight Minister Peters put out a [press release](#) announcing the assisted departure flight, and also [posted on twitter/X](#). He also shared an update on [Twitter/X](#) with pictures of those leaving New Caledonia and urging all New Zealanders in Nouméa to register on SafeTravel.
- A planned protest took place in front of the French Embassy in Wellington from 12pm – 1:30pm Wednesday 22 May. Around 50 people took part in the peaceful protest, and included around 10 speeches, “Kanak resistance” songs and chants in Te Reo Māori. Journalists from RNZ were present as well as some Members of Parliament. In addition to French security, 3 local police officers were deployed and a liaison office to supervise the demonstration. The protestors warned there might be “other actions” but did not expand on what these might be.

#### *Consular*

- **Following today's assisted departure**, we are aware of around **160** New Zealanders remaining in New Caledonia who wish to depart. New Zealanders are urged to keep their SafeTravel Registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their 'departure date' is updated.
- MFAT has upgraded SafeTravel advisory to Level 3 (out of 4) for the whole of New Caledonia **“Avoid non-essential travel”** in New Caledonia due to ongoing civil unrest.
- Post and Consular Call Centre staff continue to conduct welfare checks on Kiwis in New Caledonia.

#### *Diplomatic outreach*

- New Zealand has formal consular obligations to Switzerland, Netherlands, and Samoa. s6(a)
- s6(a)
- s6(a), s6(b)(i)

#### *Staff welfare*

- MFAT staff in Nouméa are all reported safe and well.
- s9(2)(a)

#### *Contacts*

- The MFAT Emergency Coordination Centre will operate from 8am-8pm daily and through the weekend. Please direct emails to:
  - o Incident controller [Nouméa.Controller@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Nouméa.Controller@mfat.govt.nz)
  - o Response manager [Nouméa.ResponseManager@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Nouméa.ResponseManager@mfat.govt.nz)
  - o Consular response manager [Nouméa.ConsularRM@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Nouméa.ConsularRM@mfat.govt.nz)
  - o Intel [Nouméa.Intel@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Nouméa.Intel@mfat.govt.nz)
  - o Ministerial liaison [Nouméa.MinLiaison@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Nouméa.MinLiaison@mfat.govt.nz)

#### *Media comments by other Leaders*

- International media have started to report more on the situation in New Caledonia. Outlets [including BBC, CNN and Al Jazeera](#) have covered our first assisted departure flight, alongside Australia's own efforts.
- [Cook Islands Prime Minister Mark Brown](#) noted on RNZ Morning Report yesterday (Thursday 23 May) the political unrest is 'deeply concerning to the [Pacific Islands] Forum family'. The PIF call is for 'peace and order to prevail so that we can actually engage in genuine dialogue and through the Pacific way of talanoa.' Full interview [here](#).
- [President Emmanuel Macron](#) "noted clear progress in restoring order" following his convening of the third national security and defence council meeting overnight (Tuesday 21 May).
- [New Caledonian representative in the French National Assembly Nicolas Metzdorf](#)<sup>s6(a)</sup> returned to New Caledonia last night on board a French military plane. In a radio interview on Monday 20 May, Metzdorf labelled the CCAT a "terrorist organisation" and also criticised the state for not being prepared for the current situation. Metzdorf also stated his view that the legislative process to open the electoral roll had to continue; if not it would be giving in to the CCAT, and would mean that their actions had been successful.
- [President Macron](#) strongly condemned the "inacceptable violence, destruction, intimidation and assaults against persons, property and law enforcement agents" that has taken place in New Caledonia for the past three days. Macron has sent an invitation by way of a letter, to New Caledonia's politicians, for a meeting in Paris.



- French Prime Minister Gabriel Attal, "Everything is being done to restore order and calm that Caledonians deserve," after a meeting at the presidential palace on Wednesday. He said the situation "remains very tense, with looting, riots, arson and attacks, which are unbearable and unspeakable". Speaking before the National Assembly on Tuesday, underlined the opportunity for those talks to resume and called on New Caledonia's parties to "seize the opportunity of this extended hand" to resume dialogue. "Only dialogue will allow us to appease tensions. Our hand remains extended. We need an inclusive political solution that can satisfy all stakeholders and that's why we are offering New Caledonian leaders to discuss and build together the future of New Caledonia", he told Parliament during question time.
- On Friday CCAT (an independence political party) issued a statement calling for "a time of calm to break the spiral of violence". The CCAT issued a new communiqué at midday on Friday. "In the face of the State's stubborn determination to impose constitutional change, we denounce the State's irresponsibility and hold it responsible for the loss of human life, the atrocities and the devastation of the country's economic fabric." The CCAT says it is deeply affected by the loss of these lives, "those of our young people murdered by militias backed by the State and non-independence leaders, and that of the young gendarme". In this press release, the cell coordinating field actions calls for appeasement. "A time for appeasement to halt the escalation of violence." He added: "It's a break in our fight. It expresses the CCAT's determination to preserve life. We're keeping up the pressure through our presence at phase 2.5 on the ground, maintaining filtering traffic for all citizens."
- Roch Wamytan, President of the Congress of New Caledonia said "The context" is not favourable to "discussions with the President of the Republic", after the cancellation of the videoconference proposed to Caledonian elected representatives by Emmanuel Macron. "How can you discuss with the President of the Republic under these conditions?" he continued. "We accepted the principle of discussions, except that to be able to meet the President of the Republic and listen to what he had to say to us, it was normal to prepare in advance. For me, it wasn't possible to do that today."
- French Justice Minister Eric Dupond-Moretti has called on prosecutors to "take the strongest possible action against the perpetrators of the violence" and also indicated he was considering transferring the "criminals" to mainland France.
- French Home Affairs and Overseas minister Gérald Darmanin told public TV channel France 2 he had placed 10 leaders of the CCAT (an organisation linked with FLNKS) under home detention. "This is a Mafia-like body which I do not amalgamate with political pro-independence parties...[CCAT] is a group that claims itself to be pro-independence and commits looting, murders and violence," "I have numerous elements which show this is a Mafia-like, violent organisation that loots stores and shoots real bullets at (French) gendarmes, sets businesses on fire and attacks even pro-independence institutions." "Massive reinforcements were to arrive shortly and the French state would "totally regain control", he said.
- The National Council of Chiefs of the Indigenous Kanak condemned "all acts of vandalism and gun violence", but rejected the allegations that the pro-independence movement was involved in the deadly violence. Grand Chief Hippolyte Sinewami-Htamumu expressed full support for the pro-independence group, which has mobilised more than a hundred thousand people "of all ages and from all backgrounds" in peaceful protests in recent months in the capital, Nouméa, and throughout the island. "This is not a 'terrorist group' or 'mafia group', as certain political leaders want us to believe."
- Romuald Pidjo, from the CCAT's [a pro-independence political group] Kanak delegation in Paris, on the anger of young people in Nouméa's working-class neighbourhoods [where some of the worst violence has taken place]. "These are people who are very

disadvantaged, people who have been left behind. And what do they see, all these people, every day? They see people who've come from mainland France, who have big cars. And they have nothing! The straw that broke the camel's back was this constitutional bill in which the state is going to say: 'We're going to continue to bring in people who are going to crush you, who are going to take everything in this country'."

- Leaders of a Kanak Workers Union in Paris appealed for calm and said they were deeply saddened by deaths in their faraway homeland. "We wish to see the French government make a strong political statement rather than send troops," union leader Rock Haocas told reporters. "Starting a conversation would be a strong political statement."
- Cook Islands Prime Minister Mark Brown (and outgoing PIF Chair said greater autonomy for the indigenous Kanak population is needed. "If there's one thing that specific countries value, it is the sovereignty and independence. To be able to have control over the destiny of your own country." "My initial view of the unrest that's occurring in Caledonia, it is cause to recognise greater autonomy and greater independence from the people on those islands. "As a member of the Forum now, we will be able to provide support assistance to these member countries as to the best way forward without trying to try to avoid any escalation of conflict."
- Henry Puna, outgoing secretary-general of the Pacific Islands Forum told journalists at his final news conference that "to see the collapse [and], protesting is very unfortunate", but it was predictable. He said the issue "has been boiling" since the 2021 independence referendum in the French territory, the third and final vote under the Nouméa Accord, which was boycotted by the pro-indigenous Kanak population. He said he was there in December 2021 to monitor the independence referendum when it was taken and "it was unfortunate that it was allowed to go ahead during that time". "We were in the middle of [the] Covid [pandemic] and the Kanak custom is that when somebody passes they mourn that for one year. So they weren't allowed that freedom. "As a result, they didn't want to take part in the referendum because they couldn't go against their tradition and go campaigning or do other work. That's disrespectful for the custom."
- Vanuatu's prime minister, Charlot Salwai (also chairman of the Melanesian Spearhead Group, which also includes Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands) said the indiscriminate destruction of property would affect New Caledonia's economy in a big way and have a cascading effect on the lives of all New Caledonians, including Kanaks. He said France should establish dialogue with FLNKS, which has condemned the violence, and annul the constitutional reform that sparked the crisis. "These events could have been avoided if the French government had listened."
- French High Commissioner in Nouméa Louis Le Franc said in a televised news conference the protesters were causing a "dire situation" for medicine and food for the population. He said main and secondary roads in Nouméa were blocked by barricades with burning cars and car carcasses, some with booby traps.
- Australia's foreign affairs minister, Penny Wong, said Australians were advised to reconsider their need to travel to New Caledonia due to "civil unrest, travel disruption and limited essential services". "Again I repeat and take this opportunity to repeat Australia's call for calm. We respect and support the referendum process ... and the discussions under way between all parties, and encourage all parties to work together cooperatively to shape the future of New Caledonia."
- Labour Party Deputy Leader Carmel Sepuloni said the growing unrest was a concern. At last year's Pacific Islands Forum, French Polynesian representatives were already expressing concern about how some policies from the French government might affect its indigenous population, she said.

**From:** [Noumea.Intel](#)  
**To:** [NOUMEA](#); [PACPE](#); [DCE](#); [...PACIFIC POSTS](#); [DS AAG](#); [DS EMA](#); [DS MLG](#); [AUS](#); [EUR](#); [ISED](#); [SORD Security](#); [CON](#); [PARIS](#); [FM.P/S MFA \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.P/S Associate MFA \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.Defence \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.DPMC \(FPA\) \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.Police \(Seemail\)](#); [s6\(a\)](#) [FM.Police \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.Customs Service \(Seemail\)](#); [PACMM](#); [PACREG](#); [PHM](#); [DEVPP](#); [DEVFCO](#); [...EUROPEAN POSTS](#); [SAPD](#); [PRD](#); [AMD](#)  
**Cc:** [GARVEN, Heather \(AMD\)](#); [GARVEN, Heather \(AMD\)](#); [Noumea.ResponseManager](#); [Noumea.Controller](#); [Noumea.MinLiaison](#); [Noumea.ConsularRM](#); [Noumea.AssistedDepartures](#); [Noumea.Logistics](#); [Noumea.Planning](#); [Noumea.Intel](#); ["SCMU@dpmc.govt.nz"](#); ["fiona.dally@mbie.govt.nz"](#); ["chris.shaw@mbie.govt.nz"](#); ["mike.hill@caa.govt.nz"](#); ["Ben.king@dpmc.govt.nz"](#); [...YEOMANS, Sally \(Inet\)](#); [...YEOMANS, Sally \(Inet\)](#); ["Vanessa.berry@customs.govt.nz"](#); ["sean.bolton@dpmc.govt.nz"](#); ["Cherie.bliithe@dpmc.govt.nz"](#); ["c.vandermeulen@transport.govt.nz"](#); [KANE, Jared \(PEP\)](#); [KANE, Jared \(PEP\)](#); ["Chris.Scahill@TeWhatuOra.govt.nz"](#); ["Michael.inglis@mpi.govt.nz"](#); ["sarah.tuihalangie@mpi.govt.nz"](#); ["zubair.ali@mpi.govt.nz"](#); ["Miguel.Navarro@mpi.govt.nz"](#); ["Julian.Grey@dpmc.govt.nz"](#); ["noc@mpi.govt.nz"](#); ["SUE.EDEN@nzdf.mil.nz"](#); ["David.Williams@nzdf.mil.nz"](#); [LAW, Anna \(PRD\)](#); [LAW, Anna \(PRD\)](#); [LAW, Anna \(PRD\)](#); [LAW, Anna \(PRD\)](#); [BARRINGTON, Svar \(PACREG\)](#); [BARRINGTON, Svar \(PACREG\)](#); [BARRINGTON, Svar \(PACREG\)](#); [BARRINGTON, Svar \(PACREG\)](#); [PETERS, Sonya \(CMD\)](#); [PETERS, Sonya \(CMD\)](#); [PETERS, Sonya \(CMD\)](#); [PETERS, Sonya \(CMD\)](#); [FM.Immigration NZ \(Seemail\)](#); ["kathleen.pearce@defence.govt.nz"](#); ["MODPacific@defence.govt.nz"](#); [...ROWE, Jessica \(Inet\)](#)  
**Subject:** FORMAL MESSAGE: SITREP 21: NEW CALEDONIA UNREST - FRIDAY 24 MAY  
**Date:** Friday, 24 May 2024 8:02:19 pm

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[RESTRICTED]

## Executive Summary SitRep 21: New Caledonia Unrest – Friday 24 May

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### Key media messages

- New Zealand is deeply concerned about the political unrest in New Caledonia, and we call for calm and dialogue to prevail.
- The safety of New Zealanders in New Caledonia is an urgent priority for us.
- An NZDF flight from New Caledonia arrived in Auckland this afternoon with 49 passengers on board.
- Following today's assisted departure, we are aware of around 160 New Zealanders remaining in New Caledonia who wish to depart.
- Today's flight was the third government flight to arrive in New Zealand carrying travellers from New Caledonia. Seats on these flights were prioritised based on two considerations – urgent needs and the ability for passengers to safely travel to central pick-up points in Nouméa.
- Our consular team continues to work with Australia on moving New Zealanders in other parts of New Caledonia into Nouméa to be ready for departure home on the next flights out.
- Based on our current information, the majority of people with prioritised needs who can safely travel to pick-up points have now been able to depart.
- We have asked those registered on SafeTravel to let us know their interest in any potential further flight options.
- *[If asked about potential NZDF flights over the weekend]:* We are working hard with France and Australia on potential NZDF flights in coming days.
- *[If asked about individual cases in the media]:* We are unable to comment on individual cases, but we are hopeful that all passengers with prioritised needs who can safely travel to pick-up points will be able to depart on the next available flights.

s9(2)(g)(i)

### *Assisted Departures*

- A NZDF C-130 arrived into Auckland Airport just after 3pm this afternoon, carrying 49

passengers. In addition to New Zealanders, this flight<sup>s6(a)</sup>

- On its outbound journey from Whenuapai to Magenta airport this morning,<sup>s6(a)</sup>
  - <sup>s6(a)</sup> French officials advised us that the planned French MRTT flight Noumea to Brisbane would not go ahead.<sup>s6(a)</sup>
- Pending French clearances, current planning for this weekend involves:
  - Saturday 25 May: C-130 transports<sup>s6(a)</sup> French nationals to New Caledonia, and returns 50-55 New Zealanders to Auckland.<sup>s6(a)</sup>
  - <sup>s6(a)</sup>
  - Monday 27 May: A C-130 will be available to transport passengers from Noumea to Auckland, if required.
- 50 people were repatriated back to Auckland in the early hours of Thursday morning. A French military aircraft transported them from Nouméa to Brisbane, where they were met by a NZDF aircraft, which returned them to Auckland. 48 passengers were repatriated on Tuesday's NZDF-operated flight out of Nouméa direct to Auckland.
- <sup>s6(a)</sup>

#### *In Nouméa*

- The death toll from the unrest currently sits at six people.
- French President Emmanuel Macron has arrived in New Caledonia, accompanied by the French Minister for the Interior Darmanin, the French Defence Minister Lecornu, and the Minister Delegate for Overseas France Guévenoux. While in Nouméa, the President intends to meet with local representatives to discuss the evolving situation.
- We have been informed that La Tontouta Airport, New Caledonia's international airport, will remain closed until Tuesday 28 May.
- While the situation appears to be stabilising, violence and clashes with security forces continue. As of Sunday 19 May, damage assessments estimate the cost at around XPF 40 billion (approximately NZ\$590 million). An estimated 2,000 jobs have also been impacted.

#### *In New Zealand*

- <sup>s9(2)(f)(iv)</sup>

- Yesterday morning (Thursday 23 May), the Minister of Foreign Affairs posted on [Twitter/X](#) expressing frustration at the lack of approval for flights. This post has been reported by [NZ media](#). Cook Islands Prime Minister Mark Brown noted on [RNZ Morning Report](#) yesterday morning (Thursday 23 May) the political unrest is ‘deeply concerning to the [Pacific Islands] Forum family’.
- The Minister of Foreign Affairs held bilateral calls with the Prime Ministers of Tonga and Fiji on Wednesday 22 May, as members of the Pacific Islands Forum Troika, to discuss the evolving situation in New Caledonia. MFA shared an update on [Twitter/X](#) of these calls.
- Minister Peters put out a [press release](#) announcing the first assisted departure flight, and also [posted on Twitter/X](#). He shared an update on [Twitter/X](#) with pictures of those leaving New Caledonia on Tuesday’s assisted departure flight. Minister Peters also spoke with [Checkpoint](#) and [Newstalk ZB](#) on Tuesday 21 May following the flight leaving Nouméa.
- A planned protest took place in front of the French Embassy in Wellington from 12pm – 1:30pm Wednesday 22 May, in support of Kanak people in New Caledonia. Around 50 people took part in the peaceful protest, which included around 10 speeches, “Kanak resistance” songs and chants in Te Reo Māori. New Zealand Police deployed officers to monitor the protest and ensure the security of the Embassy. New Zealand media were present at the protest (RNZ).

### **Consular response**

- Following today’s assisted departure, we are aware of around 160 New Zealanders remaining in New Caledonia who wish to depart.
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia are urged to register on SafeTravel and keep their registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their ‘departure date’ is updated.
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia should stay in place and avoid all protests, monitor local media for developments, and comply with any instructions and restrictions issued by local authorities.
- The NZ Consulate General and Consular Call Centre staff continue to conduct welfare checks on New Zealanders in New Caledonia.
- New Zealand’s current travel advisory for all of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential travel** (Level 3 of 4). This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.

## ANNEX: Full SitRep 21: New Caledonia Unrest – Friday 24 May

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### **Key media messages**

- New Zealand is deeply concerned about the political unrest in New Caledonia, and we call for calm and dialogue to prevail.
- The safety of New Zealanders in New Caledonia is an urgent priority for us.
-

An NZDF flight from New Caledonia arrived in Auckland this afternoon with 49 passengers on board.

- We are aware of around 160 New Zealanders remaining in New Caledonia who wish to depart.
- Today's flight was the third to arrive in New Zealand carrying travellers from New Caledonia. Seats on these flights were prioritised based on two considerations – urgent needs and the ability for passengers to safely travel to central pick-up points in Nouméa.
- Our consular team continues to work with Australia on moving New Zealanders in other parts of New Caledonia into Nouméa to be ready for departure home on the next flights out.
- Based on our current information, the majority of people with prioritised needs who can safely travel to pick-up points have now been able to depart.
- We have asked those registered on SafeTravel to let us know their interest in any potential further flight options. They will be contacted directly as flights are scheduled.
- *[If asked about potential flights over the weekend]:* We are working hard with France and Australia on potential NZDF flights in the coming days.
- *[If asked about individual cases in the media]:* We are unable to comment on individual cases, but we are hopeful that all passengers with prioritised needs who can safely travel to pick-up points will be able to depart on the next available flights.
- *[If asked about plans to repatriate RSE workers from Vanuatu stuck in New Zealand following the collapse of Air Vanuatu on outbound assisted departure flights]:* We explored options to repatriate RSE workers to Vanuatu but unfortunately this was not possible due to flight logistics.
- *[If asked about other foreign nationals on NZDF flights]:* A small number of seats were offered to other nationals with urgent needs.
- *[If asked about transport on the ground/road access to airports, etc.]:* We continue to work with relevant authorities on the ground to understand security and access issues, including for travel to airports in Nouméa.
- *[If raised: independence of New Caledonia]* The question of independence is one for the people of New Caledonia to decide with France. We acknowledge that the political and economic situation in New Caledonia is challenging and reiterate calls on all Parties to find a solution. We hope that peace and calm will prevail.
- s6(a) The immediate priority must be for all sides to take steps to de-escalate the situation, so that there can be dialogue and calm. No matter your views on the political arrangements in New Caledonia, everyone should agree that violence is harmful to every community there.
- *[If raised: PIF comments on crisis]* We recognise and share the concern felt among Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) members at the recent violence. It is for individual countries to make their own assessments on the situation in New Caledonia. New Zealand has been very clear on the need for all sides to take steps to de-escalate, so that there can be dialogue and calm.
- *[If asked about the specifics of the potential NZDF deployments]:* We are not able to share details on specifics at this stage.

#### Consular response

- New Zealanders are urged to keep their SafeTravel Registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their 'departure date' is updated.

- New Zealanders in need of immediate consular assistance should contact the 24/7 Consular Emergency line on +64 99 20 20 20.
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia should stay in place and avoid all protests, monitor local media for developments, and comply with any instructions and restrictions issued by local authorities.
- Our staff in Wellington and Nouméa continue to conduct welfare checks on New Zealanders in New Caledonia.
- Officials are regularly speaking with New Caledonian authorities regarding airport operations and access, and ongoing needs in relation to critical supplies such as food and medicine.
- New Zealand's current travel advisory for all of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential travel** (Level 3 of 4). This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.
- We recommend that all travellers remain in contact with their airline for any updates on flight bookings. Travellers should also contact their travel insurance provider if travel has been disrupted.
- *[If asked why the NZ Consulate in Nouméa is closed]* Due to the State of Emergency in New Caledonia, the New Zealand Consulate office is closed. Callers to the Consulate are being directed to New Zealand's 24/7 Consular Emergency line. A consular team is working on the ground to support New Zealanders to depart New Caledonia.

## Latest developments

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s9(2)(g)(i)

### *Assisted Departures*

- A NZDF C-130 arrived into Auckland Airport just after 3pm this afternoon, carrying 49 passengers. In addition to New Zealanders, this flight included <sup>s6(a)</sup>
- Air New Zealand is supporting the onwards travel of passengers as needed when they arrive in Auckland.
- On its outbound journey from Whenuapai to Magenta airport this morning, <sup>s6(a)</sup>

s6(a)

- s6(a)
- Officials had been planning towards a series of weekend assisted departures, subject to French approvals, <sup>s6(a)</sup>

s6(a)

- s6(a)
- 50 people were repatriated back to Auckland in the early hours of yesterday morning. A French military aircraft transported them from Nouméa to Brisbane, where they were met by a NZDF aircraft, which returned them to Auckland. 48 passengers were repatriated on Tuesday's NZDF-operated flight out of Nouméa direct to Auckland.
- Following the **three** assisted departure flights so far, <sup>s6(a)</sup>

We are prioritising departure of New Zealanders and foreign nationals for whom we have consular responsibility. Those with vulnerabilities will be prioritised accordingly. Other foreign nationals will be included in departure flights as space allows. As New Zealand Passport holders, Cook Islanders are included in our planning for New Zealanders.

- MBIE Temporary Accommodation Service provided accommodation support overnight to a family of five who arrived on Thursday morning's early flight, as they did not already have accommodation arranged in Auckland. The MFAT consular team on the flight from Brisbane to Auckland managed down the number requiring MBIE temporary accommodation support from 12 passengers to five passengers. <sup>s6(a)</sup>
- On Thursday 23 May, the Minister of Foreign Affairs posted on [Twitter/X](#) expressing frustration at the lack of approval for flights yesterday. This post has been reported by [NZ media](#).
- Minister Peters put out a [press release](#) announcing the first assisted departure flight on Tuesday 21 May, and also [posted on Twitter/X](#). He shared an update on [Twitter/X](#) with pictures of those leaving New Caledonia on Tuesday's assisted departure flight. Minister Peters also spoke with [Checkpoint](#) and [Newstalk ZB](#) on Tuesday 21 May following the flight leaving Nouméa.
- s6(a)
- s6(b)(i)

#### *In Nouméa*

- There are some [reports](#) of protesters erecting new barricades last night in what was described as a 'cat and mouse' game with French police reinforcements ahead of President Macron's arrival. [Journalists](#) have highlighted that the composition of President Macron's delegation could further anger pro-independence leader and fuel further unrest.
- The death toll stands at six, including 2 gendarmes and 3 Kanak. A body was also found in Nouméa harbour – the circumstances of this death are not yet clear and may be unrelated.
- **We have been informed that La Tontouta Airport, New Caledonia's international airport, will remain closed until Tuesday 28 May.**
- French President Emmanuel Macron touched down in Nouméa at around 8.30am local



time yesterday morning, accompanied by Minister of the Interior Gérald Darmanin, Associate Minister of Overseas Territories Marie Guévenoux, and Minister for the Armed Forces Sébastien Lecornu.

- Exact details of the President's programme are not known, but he met with New Caledonian elected officials yesterday and is expected to meet with representatives of the business community as well, given the significant economic impact of the civil unrest.
- The Minister of the Interior and the Minister of the Armed Forces will meet with the internal security forces. The Associate Minister for Overseas Territories will hold a specific meeting on reconstruction.
- President Macron has insisted on the need for "frank, direct, open debate on institutional and project issues". He said: "We need to bring all stakeholders to the table. Appeasement cannot mean going backwards. The objective is to have a free and confidential debate between us. I'm counting on everyone's sense of responsibility. We will succeed, because New Caledonia deserves it". [Macron hinted](#) that the emergency status could be lifted in the coming days, saying: "I personally believe that the state of emergency should not be extended."
- President Macron noted clear progress in restoring order and that "All measures are being taken to enable tourists still present in the archipelago to return home."
- Reactions from local New Caledonia political figures are mixed. <sup>s6(a)</sup>  
Leading pro-France politician Sonia Backès said the visit was a strong sign of the President's personal commitment to the situation in New Caledonia.
- In the pro-independence camp, current President of the Congress Roch Wamytan called the visit "a show", noting that "the country is on fire and the President of the Republic shows up with two Ministers that we have had problems with in the past". He added that the only thing they wanted from Macron was a response to their request for the Bill proposing changes to the New Caledonian electoral roll be withdrawn.
- <sup>s6(a)</sup>
- Other pro-independence politicians were cautiously positive and were keen to see the start of a dialogue mission. <sup>s6(a)</sup>
- While the situation appears to be stabilising, violence and clashes with security forces continue. **As of Sunday 19 May**, damage assessments estimate the cost at around XPF 40 billion (approximately NZ\$590 million). An estimated 2,000 jobs have also been impacted.
- The 6pm to 6am curfew will remain in force for the full duration of the state of emergency. This curfew covers the entire territory of New Caledonia.
- French reinforcements were focused on restoring freedom of movement by removing barricades and hazards; restocking supermarkets and pharmacies, and ensuring the efficient movement of supplies around New Caledonia; and supporting the function of health services, ensuring access was available to those in need.
- French officials confirmed last night that New Caledonia has sufficient provisions of food

and medicine, including additional supplies that have arrived in the port. Ministry officials have confirmed that supermarkets are being restocked with some food items.

#### *New Zealand's response*

- s6(a)
- Officials in Wellington, Nouméa and Paris continue to work with New Caledonian and French authorities to push for the safe and speedy repatriation of New Zealanders wishing to return from New Caledonia.
- s6(a)
- commencement of discussions and returning New Caledonia to a state of peace.
- The Minister of Foreign Affairs held bilateral calls with the Prime Ministers of Tonga and Fiji, as members of the Pacific Islands Forum Troika to discuss the evolving situation in New Caledonia. MFA shared an update on [Twitter/X](#) of these calls.
- The Minister spoke with Pacific Islands Forum Chair Prime Minister Mark Brown on Saturday 18 May. The discussion included New Zealand's desire to work with Pacific partners to help calm the situation down, and the role of the PIF to facilitate dialogue and promote de-escalation in the region.
- Officials continue to work closely with Australia<sup>s6(a)</sup> Minister Peters held a trilateral call with the Foreign Ministers of France and Australia on Monday 20 May, reiterating the request for access for repatriation flights.
- s6(b)(i)
- Following the announcement of the first repatriation flight Minister Peters put out a [press release](#) announcing the assisted departure flight, and also [posted on twitter/X](#). He also shared an update on [Twitter/X](#) with pictures of those leaving New Caledonia and urging all New Zealanders in Nouméa to register on SafeTravel.
- A planned protest took place in front of the French Embassy in Wellington from 12pm – 1:30pm Wednesday 22 May. Around 50 people took part in the peaceful protest, and included around 10 speeches, “Kanaky resistance” songs and chants in Te Reo Māori. Journalists from RNZ were present as well as some Members of Parliament. In addition to French security, 3 local police officers were deployed and a liaison office to supervise the demonstration. The protestors warned there might be “other actions” but did not expand on what these might be.

#### *Consular*

- Following today's assisted departure, we are aware of around 160 New Zealanders remaining in New Caledonia who wish to depart. New Zealanders are urged to keep their SafeTravel Registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their 'departure date' is updated.
- New Zealand's current travel advisory for all of New Caledonia is Level 3 (out of 4) “**Avoid non-essential travel**”.
- Post and Consular Call Centre staff continue to conduct welfare checks on Kiwis in New

Caledonia.

- New Zealand has formal consular obligations to Switzerland, Netherlands, and Samoa.  
s6(a)

#### *Diplomatic outreach*

- s6(a)
- s6(a), s6(b)(i)

#### *Staff welfare*

- MFAT staff in Nouméa are all reported safe and well.
- s9(2)(a)

#### *Contacts*

- The MFAT Emergency Coordination Centre will operate from 8am-8pm daily and through the weekend. Please direct emails to:
  - o Incident controller [Nouméa.Controller@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Nouméa.Controller@mfat.govt.nz)
  - o Response manager [Nouméa.ResponseManager@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Nouméa.ResponseManager@mfat.govt.nz)
  - o Consular response manager [Nouméa.ConsularRM@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Nouméa.ConsularRM@mfat.govt.nz)
  - o Intel [Nouméa.Intel@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Nouméa.Intel@mfat.govt.nz)
  - o Ministerial liaison [Nouméa.MinLiaison@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Nouméa.MinLiaison@mfat.govt.nz)

#### Media comments by other Leaders

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- International media have started to report more on the situation in New Caledonia. Outlets [including BBC, CNN and Al Jazeera](#) have covered our first assisted departure flight, alongside Australia's own efforts.
- [Cook Islands Prime Minister Mark Brown](#) noted on RNZ Morning Report yesterday (Thursday 23 May) the political unrest is 'deeply concerning to the [Pacific Islands] Forum family'. The PIF call is for 'peace and order to prevail so that we can actually engage in genuine dialogue and through the Pacific way of talanoa.' Full interview [here](#).
- [President Emmanuel Macron](#) "noted clear progress in restoring order" following his convening of the third national security and defence council meeting overnight (Tuesday 21 May).
- [New Caledonian representative in the French National Assembly Nicolas Metzdorf](#)<sup>s6(a)</sup> returned to New Caledonia last night on board a French military plane. In a radio interview on Monday 20 May, Metzdorf labelled the CCAT a "terrorist organisation" and also criticised the state for not being prepared for the current situation. Metzdorf also stated his view that the legislative process to open the electoral roll had to continue; if not it would be giving in to the CCAT, and would mean that their actions had been successful.
- [President Macron](#) strongly condemned the "inacceptable violence, destruction, intimidation and assaults against persons, property and law enforcement agents" that has

taken place in New Caledonia for the past three days. Macron has sent an invitation by way of a letter, to New Caledonia's politicians, for a meeting in Paris.

- French Prime Minister Gabriel Attal, "Everything is being done to restore order and calm that Caledonians deserve," after a meeting at the presidential palace on Wednesday. He said the situation "remains very tense, with looting, riots, arson and attacks, which are unbearable and unspeakable". Speaking before the National Assembly on Tuesday, underlined the opportunity for those talks to resume and called on New Caledonia's parties to "seize the opportunity of this extended hand" to resume dialogue. "Only dialogue will allow us to appease tensions. Our hand remains extended. We need an inclusive political solution that can satisfy all stakeholders and that's why we are offering New Caledonian leaders to discuss and build together the future of New Caledonia", he told Parliament during question time.
- On Friday CCAT (an independence political party) issued a statement calling for "a time of calm to break the spiral of violence". The CCAT issued a new communiqué at midday on Friday. "In the face of the State's stubborn determination to impose constitutional change, we denounce the State's irresponsibility and hold it responsible for the loss of human life, the atrocities and the devastation of the country's economic fabric." The CCAT says it is deeply affected by the loss of these lives, "those of our young people murdered by militias backed by the State and non-independence leaders, and that of the young gendarme". In this press release, the cell coordinating field actions calls for appeasement. "A time for appeasement to halt the escalation of violence." He added: "It's a break in our fight. It expresses the CCAT's determination to preserve life. We're keeping up the pressure through our presence at phase 2.5 on the ground, maintaining filtering traffic for all citizens."
- Roch Wamytan, President of the Congress of New Caledonia said "The context" is not favourable to "discussions with the President of the Republic", after the cancellation of the videoconference proposed to Caledonian elected representatives by Emmanuel Macron. "How can you discuss with the President of the Republic under these conditions?" he continued. "We accepted the principle of discussions, except that to be able to meet the President of the Republic and listen to what he had to say to us, it was normal to prepare in advance. For me, it wasn't possible to do that today."
- French Justice Minister Eric Dupond-Moretti has called on prosecutors to "take the strongest possible action against the perpetrators of the violence" and also indicated he was considering transferring the "criminals" to mainland France.
- French Home Affairs and Overseas minister Gérald Darmanin told public TV channel France 2 he had placed 10 leaders of the CCAT (an organisation linked with FLNKS) under home detention. "This is a Mafia-like body which I do not amalgamate with political pro-independence parties...[CCAT] is a group that claims itself to be pro-independence and commits looting, murders and violence," "I have numerous elements which show this is a Mafia-like, violent organisation that loots stores and shoots real bullets at (French) gendarmes, sets businesses on fire and attacks even pro-independence institutions." "Massive reinforcements were to arrive shortly and the French state would "totally regain control", he said.
- The National Council of Chiefs of the Indigenous Kanak condemned "all acts of vandalism and gun violence", but rejected the allegations that the pro-independence movement was involved in the deadly violence. Grand Chief Hippolyte Sinewami-Htamumu expressed full support for the pro-independence group, which has mobilised more than a hundred thousand people "of all ages and from all backgrounds" in peaceful protests in recent months in the capital, Nouméa, and throughout the island. "This is not a 'terrorist group' or 'mafia group', as certain political leaders want us to believe."
- Romuald Pidjo, from the CCAT's [a pro-independence political group] Kanak delegation in

Paris, on the anger of young people in Nouméa's working-class neighbourhoods [where some of the worst violence has taken place]. "These are people who are very disadvantaged, people who have been left behind. And what do they see, all these people, every day? They see people who've come from mainland France, who have big cars. And they have nothing! The straw that broke the camel's back was this constitutional bill in which the state is going to say: 'We're going to continue to bring in people who are going to crush you, who are going to take everything in this country'."

- Leaders of a Kanak Workers Union in Paris appealed for calm and said they were deeply saddened by deaths in their faraway homeland. "We wish to see the French government make a strong political statement rather than send troops," union leader Rock Haocas told reporters. "Starting a conversation would be a strong political statement."
- Cook Islands Prime Minister Mark Brown (and outgoing PIF Chair) said greater autonomy for the indigenous Kanak population is needed. "If there's one thing that specific countries value, it is the sovereignty and independence. To be able to have control over the destiny of your own country." "My initial view of the unrest that's occurring in Caledonia, it is cause to recognise greater autonomy and greater independence from the people on those islands. "As a member of the Forum now, we will be able to provide support assistance to these member countries as to the best way forward without trying to try to avoid any escalation of conflict."
- Henry Puna, outgoing secretary-general of the Pacific Islands Forum told journalists at his final news conference that "to see the collapse [and], protesting is very unfortunate", but it was predictable. He said the issue "has been boiling" since the 2021 independence referendum in the French territory, the third and final vote under the Nouméa Accord, which was boycotted by the pro-indigenous Kanak population. He said he was there in December 2021 to monitor the independence referendum when it was taken and "it was unfortunate that it was allowed to go ahead during that time". "We were in the middle of [the] Covid [pandemic] and the Kanak custom is that when somebody passes they mourn that for one year. So they weren't allowed that freedom. "As a result, they didn't want to take part in the referendum because they couldn't go against their tradition and go campaigning or do other work. That's disrespectful for the custom."
- Vanuatu's prime minister, Charlot Salwai (also chairman of the Melanesian Spearhead Group, which also includes Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands) said the indiscriminate destruction of property would affect New Caledonia's economy in a big way and have a cascading effect on the lives of all New Caledonians, including Kanaks. He said France should establish dialogue with FLNKS, which has condemned the violence, and annul the constitutional reform that sparked the crisis. "These events could have been avoided if the French government had listened."
- Australia's foreign affairs minister, Penny Wong, said Australians were advised to reconsider their need to travel to New Caledonia due to "civil unrest, travel disruption and limited essential services". "Again I repeat and take this opportunity to repeat Australia's call for calm. We respect and support the referendum process ... and the discussions under way between all parties, and encourage all parties to work together cooperatively to shape the future of New Caledonia."
- Labour Party Deputy Leader Carmel Sepuloni said the growing unrest was a concern. At last year's Pacific Islands Forum, French Polynesian representatives were already expressing concern about how some policies from the French government might affect its indigenous population, she said.

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- Labour Party Deputy Leader Carmel Sepuloni said the growing unrest was a concern. At last year's Pacific Islands Forum, French Polynesian representatives were already expressing concern about how some policies from the French government might affect its indigenous population, she said.

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**Subject:** FORMAL MESSAGE: SITREP 22: NEW CALEDONIA UNREST - SATURDAY 25 MAY  
**Date:** Saturday, 25 May 2024 11:19:03 am

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[RESTRICTED]

## Executive Summary SitRep 22: New Caledonia Unrest – Saturday 25 May

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### **Key media messages**

- New Zealand is deeply concerned about the political unrest in New Caledonia, and we call for calm and dialogue to prevail.
- The safety of New Zealanders in New Caledonia is an urgent priority for us.
- Today a fourth NZDF flight is assisting people to depart from New Caledonia. The direct flight from Noumea is scheduled to arrive in Auckland this afternoon with around 57 people on board.
- <sup>s6(a)</sup>
- Following today's flight we are aware of around 110 New Zealanders remaining in New Caledonia who wish to depart.
- Seats on assisted departure flights have been prioritised based on two considerations – urgent needs and the ability for passengers to safely travel to central pick-up points in Nouméa.
- Our consular team continues to work with Australia on moving New Zealanders in other parts of New Caledonia into Nouméa to be ready for departure home on the next flights out.
- Based on our current information, the majority of people with prioritised needs who can safely travel to pick-up points have now been able to depart.
- We have asked those registered on SafeTravel to let us know their interest in any potential further flight options.
- *[If asked about potential NZDF flights]:* We are working hard to finalise logistics for potential NZDF flights in coming days.
- *[If asked about individual cases in the media]:* We are unable to comment on individual cases, but we are hopeful that all passengers with prioritised needs who can safely travel to pick-up points will be able to depart on the next available flights.

## **Developments - NOT FOR PUBLIC RELEASE**

### *Assisted Departures*

- A C-130 departed Auckland Airport shortly after 8am this morning. It is carrying <sup>s6(a)</sup> French passengers to be repatriated to New Caledonia, <sup>s6(a)</sup>. On arrival in Magenta Airport in Noumea, it will pick up 57 passengers to be returned to Auckland. In addition to New Zealanders, <sup>s6(a)</sup> We expect this flight will land in Auckland at approximately 5pm this evening.
- We are making progress to confirm the following flights over the next three days:
  - Sunday – two flights using two NZDF aircraft (one C-130 and one 757) and a transit point in Port Vila; if approved we would expect to be able to assist the departure of up to 120 passengers;
  - Monday – one C130 flight Noumea direct to Auckland, anticipated capacity of up to 60 passengers; and
  - Tuesday – <sup>s6(a)</sup> If this operates and commercial flights are still not available this will be a further opportunity to support any remaining New Zealanders and foreign nationals (where governments have formally requested assistance) to leave New Caledonia.
- A NZDF C-130 arrived into Auckland Airport just after 3pm yesterday afternoon, carrying 49 passengers. In addition to New Zealanders, this flight <sup>s6(a)</sup>
- On its outbound journey from Whenuapai to Magenta airport yesterday morning, <sup>s6(a)</sup>
- 50 people were repatriated back to Auckland in the early hours of Thursday morning. A French military aircraft transported them from Nouméa to Brisbane, where they were met by a NZDF aircraft, which returned them to Auckland. 48 passengers were repatriated on Tuesday's NZDF-operated flight out of Nouméa direct to Auckland.

### *In Nouméa*

- Local and New Zealand media are reporting a further death from the unrest; a 48 year old man who was shot by police yesterday (Friday 24 May). The death toll from the unrest now sits at seven people.
- French President Macron held a press conference in Nouméa yesterday, calling for a return to calm and providing an overview on the next steps for dialogue. This will involve a mediation mission, following a return to calm and the dismantling of all roadblocks.
- We have been informed that La Tontouta Airport, New Caledonia's international airport, will remain closed until at least Tuesday 28 May.
- While the situation appears to be stabilising, violence and clashes with security forces continue. As of Sunday 19 May, damage assessments estimate the cost at around XPF 40 billion (approximately NZ\$590 million). An estimated 2,000 jobs have also been impacted.

### *In New Zealand*

- <sup>s9(2)(f)(iv)</sup>



- On Thursday 23 May, the Minister of Foreign Affairs posted on [Twitter/X](#) expressing frustration at the lack of approval for flights. This post has been reported by [NZ media](#). Cook Islands Prime Minister Mark Brown noted on [RNZ Morning Report](#) yesterday morning (Thursday 23 May) the political unrest is ‘deeply concerning to the [Pacific Islands] Forum family’.
- The Minister of Foreign Affairs held bilateral calls with the Prime Ministers of Tonga and Fiji on Wednesday 22 May, as members of the Pacific Islands Forum Troika, to discuss the evolving situation in New Caledonia. MFA shared an update on [Twitter/X](#) of these calls.
- Minister Peters put out a [press release](#) announcing the first assisted departure flight, and also [posted on Twitter/X](#). He shared an update on [Twitter/X](#) with pictures of those leaving New Caledonia on Tuesday’s assisted departure flight. Minister Peters also spoke with [Checkpoint](#) and [Newstalk ZB](#) on Tuesday 21 May following the flight leaving Nouméa.
- A planned protest took place in front of the French Embassy in Wellington from 12pm – 1:30pm Wednesday 22 May, in support of Kanak people in New Caledonia. Around 50 people took part in the peaceful protest, which included around 10 speeches, “Kanak resistance” songs and chants in Te Reo Māori. New Zealand Police deployed officers to monitor the protest and ensure the security of the Embassy. New Zealand media were present at the protest (RNZ).

### **Consular response**

- Following yesterday’s assisted departure, we are aware of around 160 New Zealanders remaining in New Caledonia who wish to depart.
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia are urged to register on SafeTravel and keep their registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their ‘departure date’ is updated.
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia should stay in place and avoid all protests, monitor local media for developments, and comply with any instructions and restrictions issued by local authorities.
- The NZ Consulate General and Consular Call Centre staff continue to conduct welfare checks on New Zealanders in New Caledonia.
- New Zealand’s current travel advisory for all of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential travel** (Level 3 of 4). This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.

## ANNEX: Full SitRep 22: New Caledonia Unrest – Saturday 25 May

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### **Key media messages**

- New Zealand is deeply concerned about the political unrest in New Caledonia, and we call for calm and dialogue to prevail.
- The safety of New Zealanders in New Caledonia is an urgent priority for us.
- **Today a fourth NZDF flight is assisting people to depart from New Caledonia. The direct flight from Noumea is scheduled to arrive in Auckland mid-afternoon with around 57 people on board.**

- **Following today's flight** we are aware of around **110** New Zealanders remaining in New Caledonia who wish to depart.
- Seats on **assisted departure** flights **have been** prioritised based on two considerations – urgent needs and the ability for passengers to safely travel to central pick-up points in Nouméa.
- Our consular team continues to work with Australia on moving New Zealanders in other parts of New Caledonia into Nouméa to be ready for departure home on the next flights out.
- Based on our current information, the majority of people with prioritised needs who can safely travel to pick-up points have now been able to depart.
- We have asked those registered on SafeTravel to let us know their interest in any potential further flight options. They will be contacted directly as flights are scheduled.
- *[If asked about potential NZDF flights]:* We are working hard to finalise logistics for potential NZDF flights in coming days.
- *[If asked about potential flights over the weekend]:* We are working hard with France and Australia on potential NZDF flights in the coming days.
- *[If asked about individual cases in the media]:* We are unable to comment on individual cases, but we are hopeful that all passengers with prioritised needs who can safely travel to pick-up points will be able to depart on the next available flights.
- *[If asked about plans to repatriate RSE workers from Vanuatu stuck in New Zealand following the collapse of Air Vanuatu on outbound assisted departure flights]:* We explored options to repatriate RSE workers to Vanuatu but unfortunately this was not possible due to flight logistics.
- *[If asked about other foreign nationals on NZDF flights]:* A small number of seats were offered to other nationals with urgent needs.
- s6(a)
- *[If asked about transport on the ground/road access to airports, etc.]:* We continue to work with relevant authorities on the ground to understand security and access issues, including for travel to airports in Nouméa.
- *[If raised: independence of New Caledonia]* The question of independence is one for the people of New Caledonia to decide with France. We acknowledge that the political and economic situation in New Caledonia is challenging and reiterate calls on all Parties to find a solution. We hope that peace and calm will prevail.
- s6(a)
 

The immediate priority must be for all sides to take steps to de-escalate the situation, so that there can be dialogue and calm. No matter your views on the political arrangements in New Caledonia, everyone should agree that violence is harmful to every community there.
- *[If raised: PIF comments on crisis]* We recognise and share the concern felt among Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) members at the recent violence. It is for individual countries to make their own assessments on the situation in New Caledonia. New Zealand has been very clear on the need for all sides to take steps to de-escalate, so that there can be dialogue and calm.
- *[If asked about the specifics of the potential NZDF deployments]:* We are not able to share

details on specifics at this stage.

#### Consular response

- New Zealanders are urged to keep their SafeTravel Registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their 'departure date' is updated.
- New Zealanders in need of immediate consular assistance should contact the 24/7 Consular Emergency line on +64 99 20 20 20.
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia should stay in place and avoid all protests, monitor local media for developments, and comply with any instructions and restrictions issued by local authorities.
- Our staff in Wellington and Nouméa continue to conduct welfare checks on New Zealanders in New Caledonia.
- Officials are regularly speaking with New Caledonian authorities regarding airport operations and access, and ongoing needs in relation to critical supplies such as food and medicine.
- New Zealand's current travel advisory for all of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential travel** (Level 3 of 4). This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.
- We recommend that all travellers remain in contact with their airline for any updates on flight bookings. Travellers should also contact their travel insurance provider if travel has been disrupted.
- *[If asked why the NZ Consulate in Nouméa is closed]* Due to the State of Emergency in New Caledonia, the New Zealand Consulate office is closed. Callers to the Consulate are being directed to New Zealand's 24/7 Consular Emergency line. A consular team is working on the ground to support New Zealanders to depart New Caledonia.

#### Latest developments

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s9(2)(g)(i)

#### Assisted Departures

- A C-130 departed Auckland Airport shortly after 8am this morning. <sup>s9(2)(g)(i)</sup>

On arrival in Magenta Airport in Noumea, it will pick up 57 passengers to be returned to Auckland. In addition to New Zealanders, <sup>s6(a)</sup>

We expect this flight will land in Auckland at approximately 5pm this evening.
- We are making progress to confirm the following flights over the next three days:
  - Sunday – two flights using two NZDF aircraft (one C-130 and one 757) and a transit point in Port Vila; if approved we would expect to be able to assist the departure of up to 120 passengers;
  - Monday – one C130 flight Noumea direct to Auckland, anticipated capacity of up to 60 passengers; and

- Tuesday – <sup>s6(a)</sup>  

If this operates and commercial flights are still not available this will be a further opportunity to support any remaining New Zealanders and foreign nationals (where governments have formally requested assistance) to leave New Caledonia.
- A NZDF C-130 arrived into Auckland Airport just after 3pm yesterday, carrying 49 passengers. In addition to New Zealanders, this flight <sup>s6(a)</sup>
- Air New Zealand is supporting the onwards travel of passengers as needed when they arrive in Auckland.
- On its outbound journey from Whenuapai to Magenta airport yesterday, <sup>s6(a)</sup>
- 50 people were repatriated back to Auckland in the early hours of Thursday morning. A French military aircraft transported them from Nouméa to Brisbane, where they were met by a NZDF aircraft, which returned them to Auckland. 48 passengers were repatriated on Tuesday's NZDF-operated flight out of Nouméa direct to Auckland.
- Following the three assisted departure flights so far, <sup>s6(a)</sup>

We are prioritising departure of New Zealanders and foreign nationals for whom we have consular responsibility. Those with vulnerabilities will be prioritised accordingly. Other foreign nationals will be included in departure flights as space allows. As New Zealand Passport holders, Cook Islanders are included in our planning for New Zealanders.

- MBIE Temporary Accommodation Service provided accommodation support overnight to a family of five who arrived on Thursday morning's early flight, as they did not already have accommodation arranged in Auckland. The MFAT consular team on the flight from Brisbane to Auckland managed down the number requiring MBIE temporary accommodation support from 12 passengers to five passengers. This service may also be required on Sunday night, as the proposed NZDF 757 flight from Port Vila would arrive late at night.
- On Thursday 23 May, the Minister of Foreign Affairs posted on [Twitter/X](#) expressing frustration at the lack of approval for flights on Thursday. This post has been reported by [NZ media](#).
- <sup>s6(a)</sup>
- Minister Peters announced the first assisted departure flight in a [press release](#) on Tuesday 21 May and also spoke with [Checkpoint](#) and [Newstalk ZB](#). He has posted about subsequent flights on Twitter/X.
- <sup>s6(a)</sup>
- <sup>s6(b)(i)</sup>
- <sup>s6(b)(i)</sup>

are currently considering a response.

*In Nouméa*

- Local and New Zealand media are reporting a further death from the unrest; a 48 year old man who was shot by police yesterday (Friday 24 May). The death toll from the unrest now sits at seven people.
- We have been informed that La Tontouta Airport, New Caledonia's international airport, will remain closed until Tuesday 28 May.
- French President Macron held a press conference in Nouméa yesterday. He said the French Government's objective was to restore calm and order as quickly as possible, and not give in to violence. Macron referred to the 'path of forgiveness' and the 'path to the future', the latter of which was blocked by riots and actions of delinquents, and the political disagreement on electoral reform. He asserted that the electoral reform has 'democratic legitimacy', but promised that it would not be 'forced through'.
- After a few weeks of calm, talks could begin, but this would be contingent on the lifting of remaining roadblocks and checkpoints. There would be a 'mediation and work mission' to work out an agreement with local stakeholders in the coming weeks. Macron hoped that the agreement could be 'put to a vote by the people of New Caledonia'.
- The subjects of future negotiations would include: the electoral body, the organisation of power, the distribution of seats, citizenship, inequalities, the economic future including the nickel industry, and the self-determination vote.
- Macron also announced the mobilisation of further French tactical units, including helicopters and armoured vehicles to be deployed in neighbourhoods still held by rioters.
- s6(a)

s6(a)

While the situation appears to be stabilising, violence and clashes with security forces continue. As of Sunday 19 May, damage assessments estimate the cost at around XPF 40 billion (approximately NZ\$590 million). An estimated 2,000 jobs have also been impacted.

- The 6pm to 6am curfew will remain in force for the full duration of the state of emergency. This curfew covers the entire territory of New Caledonia.
- French reinforcements were focused on restoring freedom of movement by removing barricades and hazards; restocking supermarkets and pharmacies, and ensuring the efficient movement of supplies around New Caledonia; and supporting the function of health services, ensuring access was available to those in need.

- French officials have confirmed that there are sufficient provisions of food and medicine. Ministry officials have confirmed that supermarkets are being restocked with some food items.

#### *New Zealand's response*

- s9(2)(f)(iv)
- s6(a)
- The Minister of Foreign Affairs held bilateral calls with the Prime Ministers of Tonga and Fiji, as members of the Pacific Islands Forum Troika to discuss the evolving situation in New Caledonia. MFA shared an update on [Twitter/X](#) of these calls.
- The Minister spoke with Pacific Islands Forum Chair Prime Minister Mark Brown on Saturday 18 May. The discussion included New Zealand's desire to work with Pacific partners to help calm the situation down, and the role of the PIF to facilitate dialogue and promote de-escalation in the region.
- Officials continue to work closely with Australia s6(a)  
Minister Peters held a trilateral call with the Foreign Ministers of France and Australia on Monday 20 May, reiterating the request for access for repatriation flights.
- s6(b)(i)
- Following the announcement of the first repatriation flight Minister Peters put out a [press release](#) announcing the assisted departure flight, and also [posted on twitter/X](#). He also shared an update on [Twitter/X](#) with pictures of those leaving New Caledonia and urging all New Zealanders in Nouméa to register on SafeTravel.
- A planned protest took place in front of the French Embassy in Wellington from 12pm – 1:30pm Wednesday 22 May. Around 50 people took part in the peaceful protest, and included around 10 speeches, “Kanak resistance” songs and chants in Te Reo Māori. Journalists from RNZ were present as well as some Members of Parliament. In addition to French security, 3 local police officers were deployed and a liaison office to supervise the demonstration. The protestors warned there might be “other actions” but did not expand on what these might be.

#### *Consular*

- Following today's assisted departure, we are aware of around [110](#) New Zealanders remaining in New Caledonia who wish to depart. New Zealanders are urged to keep their SafeTravel Registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their 'departure date' is updated.
- New Zealand's current travel advisory for all of New Caledonia is Level 3 (out of 4) **“Avoid non-essential travel”**.
- Post and Consular Call Centre staff continue to conduct welfare checks on Kiwis in New Caledonia.

- New Zealand has formal consular obligations to Switzerland, Netherlands, and Samoa.  
s6(a)

#### *Diplomatic outreach*

- s6(a)
- s6(b)(i)

#### *Staff welfare*

- MFAT staff in Nouméa are all reported safe and well.
- s9(2)(a)

#### *Contacts*

- The MFAT Emergency Coordination Centre will operate from 8am-8pm daily and through the weekend. Please direct emails to:
  - Incident controller [Noumea.Controller@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.Controller@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Response manager [Noumea.ResponseManager@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.ResponseManager@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Consular response manager [Noumea.ConsularRM@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.ConsularRM@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Intel [Noumea.Intel@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.Intel@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Ministerial liaison [Noumea.MinLiaison@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.MinLiaison@mfat.govt.nz)

#### Media comments by other Leaders

- International media have started to report more on the situation in New Caledonia. Outlets [including BBC, CNN and Al Jazeera](#) have covered our first assisted departure flight, alongside Australia's own efforts.
- [Cook Islands Prime Minister Mark Brown](#) noted on RNZ Morning Report yesterday (Thursday 23 May) the political unrest is 'deeply concerning to the [Pacific Islands] Forum family'. The PIF call is for 'peace and order to prevail so that we can actually engage in genuine dialogue and through the Pacific way of talanoa.' Full interview [here](#).
- [New Caledonian representative in the French National Assembly Nicolas Metzdorf](#)<sup>s6(a)</sup> returned to New Caledonia last night on board a French military plane. In a radio interview on Monday 20 May, Metzdorf labelled the CCAT a "terrorist organisation" and also criticised the state for not being prepared for the current situation. Metzdorf also stated his view that the legislative process to open the electoral roll had to continue; if not it would be giving in to the CCAT, and would mean that their actions had been successful.
- [On Friday CCAT \(an independence political party\) issued a statement](#) calling for "a time of calm to break the spiral of violence". The CCAT issued a new communiqué at midday on Friday. "In the face of the State's stubborn determination to impose constitutional change, we denounce the State's irresponsibility and hold it responsible for the loss of human life, the atrocities and the devastation of the country's economic fabric." The CCAT says it is deeply affected by the loss of these lives, "those of our young people murdered by militias

backed by the State and non-independence leaders, and that of the young gendarme". In this press release, the cell coordinating field actions calls for appeasement. "A time for appeasement to halt the escalation of violence." He added: "It's a break in our fight. It expresses the CCAT's determination to preserve life. We're keeping up the pressure through our presence at phase 2.5 on the ground, maintaining filtering traffic for all citizens."

- Roch Wamytan, President of the Congress of New Caledonia said "The context" is not favourable to "discussions with the President of the Republic", after the cancellation of the videoconference proposed to Caledonian elected representatives by Emmanuel Macron. "How can you discuss with the President of the Republic under these conditions?" he continued. "We accepted the principle of discussions, except that to be able to meet the President of the Republic and listen to what he had to say to us, it was normal to prepare in advance. For me, it wasn't possible to do that today."
- French Justice Minister Eric Dupond-Moretti has called on prosecutors to "take the strongest possible action against the perpetrators of the violence" and also indicated he was considering transferring the "criminals" to mainland France.
- French Home Affairs and Overseas minister Gérald Darmanin told public TV channel France 2 he had placed 10 leaders of the CCAT (an organisation linked with FLNKS) under home detention. "This is a Mafia-like body which I do not amalgamate with political pro-independence parties...[CCAT] is a group that claims itself to be pro-independence and commits looting, murders and violence," "I have numerous elements which show this is a Mafia-like, violent organisation that loots stores and shoots real bullets at (French) gendarmes, sets businesses on fire and attacks even pro-independence institutions." "Massive reinforcements were to arrive shortly and the French state would "totally regain control", he said.
- The National Council of Chiefs of the Indigenous Kanak condemned "all acts of vandalism and gun violence", but rejected the allegations that the pro-independence movement was involved in the deadly violence. Grand Chief Hippolyte Sinewami-Htamumu expressed full support for the pro-independence group, which has mobilised more than a hundred thousand people "of all ages and from all backgrounds" in peaceful protests in recent months in the capital, Nouméa, and throughout the island. "This is not a 'terrorist group' or 'mafia group', as certain political leaders want us to believe."
- Romuald Pidjo, from the CCAT's [a pro-independence political group] Kanak delegation in Paris, on the anger of young people in Nouméa's working-class neighbourhoods [where some of the worst violence has taken place]. "These are people who are very disadvantaged, people who have been left behind. And what do they see, all these people, every day? They see people who've come from mainland France, who have big cars. And they have nothing! The straw that broke the camel's back was this constitutional bill in which the state is going to say: 'We're going to continue to bring in people who are going to crush you, who are going to take everything in this country'."
- Leaders of a Kanak Workers Union in Paris appealed for calm and said they were deeply saddened by deaths in their faraway homeland. "We wish to see the French government make a strong political statement rather than send troops," union leader Rock Haocas told reporters. "Starting a conversation would be a strong political statement."
- Cook Islands Prime Minister Mark Brown (and outgoing PIF Chair) said greater autonomy for the indigenous Kanak population is needed. "If there's one thing that specific countries value, it is the sovereignty and independence. To be able to have control over the destiny of your own country." "My initial view of the unrest that's occurring in Caledonia, it is cause to recognise greater autonomy and greater independence from the people on those islands. "As a member of the Forum now, we will be able to provide support assistance to these member countries as to the best way forward without trying to try to avoid any



escalation of conflict."

- Henry Puna, outgoing Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum told journalists at his final news conference that "to see the collapse [and], protesting is very unfortunate", but it was predictable. He said the issue "has been boiling" since the 2021 independence referendum in the French territory, the third and final vote under the Nouméa Accord, which was boycotted by the pro-indigenous Kanak population. He said he was there in December 2021 to monitor the independence referendum when it was taken and "it was unfortunate that it was allowed to go ahead during that time". "We were in the middle of [the] Covid [pandemic] and the Kanak custom is that when somebody passes they mourn that for one year. So they weren't allowed that freedom. "As a result, they didn't want to take part in the referendum because they couldn't go against their tradition and go campaigning or do other work. That's disrespectful for the custom."
- Vanuatu's prime minister, Charlot Salwai (also chairman of the Melanesian Spearhead Group, which also includes Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands) said the indiscriminate destruction of property would affect New Caledonia's economy in a big way and have a cascading effect on the lives of all New Caledonians, including Kanaks. He said France should establish dialogue with FLNKS, which has condemned the violence, and annul the constitutional reform that sparked the crisis. "These events could have been avoided if the French government had listened."
- Australia's foreign affairs minister, Penny Wong, said Australians were advised to reconsider their need to travel to New Caledonia due to "civil unrest, travel disruption and limited essential services". "Again I repeat and take this opportunity to repeat Australia's call for calm. We respect and support the referendum process ... and the discussions under way between all parties, and encourage all parties to work together cooperatively to shape the future of New Caledonia."
- Labour Party Deputy Leader Carmel Sepuloni said the growing unrest was a concern. At last year's Pacific Islands Forum, French Polynesian representatives were already expressing concern about how some policies from the French government might affect its indigenous population, she said.

Released under the Official Information Act

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**To:** [NOUMEA](#); [PACPE](#); [DCE](#); [...PACIFIC POSTS](#); [DS AAG](#); [DS EMA](#); [DS MLG](#); [AUS](#); [EUR](#); [ISED](#); [SORD Security](#); [CON](#); [PARIS](#); [FM.P/S MFA \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.P/S Associate MFA \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.Defence \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.DPMC \(FPA\) \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.Police \(Seemail\)](#); <sup>s6(a)</sup> [FM.Police \(Seemail\)](#); [FM.Customs Service \(Seemail\)](#); [PACMM](#); [PACREG](#); [PHM](#); [DEVPP](#); [DEVFCO](#); [...EUROPEAN POSTS](#)  
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**Subject:** FORMAL MESSAGE: SITREP 23: NEW CALEDONIA UNREST - SATURDAY 25 MAY  
**Date:** Saturday, 25 May 2024 7:34:50 pm

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[RESTRICTED]

## Executive Summary SitRep 23: New Caledonia Unrest – Saturday 25 May

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### Key media messages

- New Zealand is deeply concerned about the political unrest in New Caledonia, and we call for calm and dialogue to prevail.
- The safety of New Zealanders in New Caledonia is an urgent priority for us.
- An NZDF flight from Noumea arrived in Auckland this afternoon with 57 passengers on board.
- We are aware of 108 New Zealanders remaining in New Caledonia who wish to depart.
- Seats on assisted departure flights have been prioritised based on two considerations – urgent needs and the ability for passengers to safely travel to central pick-up points in Nouméa.
- Our consular team continues to work on options for New Zealanders in other parts of New Caledonia to travel into Nouméa to be ready for departure home on the next flights out.
- *[If asked for details on upcoming NZDF flights]:* We are working hard to finalise logistics for NZDF flights in coming days.
- *[If asked about individual cases in the media]:* We are unable to comment on individual cases. We are continuing to be in touch directly with New Zealanders in New Caledonia who have indicated they wish to depart.

s9(2)(g)(i)

### *Assisted Departures and Consular Response*

- A C-130 departed Auckland Airport shortly after 8am this morning, to pick up 57 passengers from Noumea. **The flight landed at Auckland International Airport at 1646h.**
- Officials are making progress to confirm the following flights over the next three days:
  - Sunday – **one C-130 flight leaving Noumea in the evening, carrying approximately 50 passengers. This operation could also involve the repatriation of** <sup>s6(a)</sup> **French nationals from Auckland to Noumea, expected to arrive in Noumea at 1600;**

- Monday – one C130 flight Noumea direct to Auckland, anticipated capacity of approximately 50 passengers; and
- Tuesday – we may need to operate a further flight to repatriate the remaining New Zealand citizens and foreign nationals for whom we have consular responsibility.
- s6(a)

If this operates and commercial flights are still not available this will be a further opportunity to support any remaining New Zealanders and foreign nationals (where governments have formally requested assistance) to leave New Caledonia.

- Details of the assisted departures from Noumea to Auckland so far:

Date	Operator - Route	TOTAL PAX*	NZers**	Foreign Nationals
Tuesday 21 May	NZDF C-130 Noumea - Auckland	43	37	s6(a)
Wednesday 22 May	French flight Noumea - Brisbane; NZDF B757 Brisbane - Auckland	49	44	
Friday 24 May	NZDF C-130 Noumea - Auckland	49	42	
Saturday 25 May	NZDF C-130 Noumea - Auckland	57	48	
		198	171	

\*PAX numbers excludes MFAT & other agency staff/family

\*\*NZ citizens, Permanent Residents, and dual nationals

- In recent days there have been few options available for New Zealanders in more remote parts of New Caledonia to travel to Noumea. The consulate has been working to find options to bring these citizens to Noumea for repatriation. On Friday 24 May, French officials acknowledged New Zealand's strong desire to assist its citizens to depart New Caledonia. They signalled they expect to have puma helicopters available in a few days that can assist New Zealand to collect its citizens from remote areas.
- Following today's assisted departure flight, 108 New Zealanders remain in New Caledonia who wish to depart.
  - 92 are in locations where they are able to get to the assembly point
  - 16 are in locations that make reaching the meeting point difficult
  - 3 are considered 'Medicals'. 2 of them are in the category of 'cannot reach meeting point'
  - 2 are NZ citizens travelling on foreign passports
  - 42 are travelling on foreign passports.
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia continue to be updated and contacted through various means including regular SafeTravel messages, welfare checks by the New Zealand Consulate in Noumea, and calls/messages from MFAT's Emergency Crisis Centre.
- Nationals from 14 countries have been evacuated on New Zealand flights to date. s6(a)  
We are prioritising

departure of New Zealanders and foreign nationals for whom we have consular responsibility.

- The NZDF outbound journey from Whenuapai to Magenta airport on Friday<sup>s6(a)</sup>
- s6(a)
- New Zealand's current travel advisory for all of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential travel** (Level 3 of 4). This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.

#### *In Nouméa*

- Local and New Zealand media are reporting a further death from the unrest; a 48 year old man who was shot by police yesterday (Friday 24 May). The death toll from the unrest now sits at seven people.
- French President Macron held a press conference in Nouméa yesterday, calling for a return to calm and providing an overview on the next steps for dialogue. This will involve a mediation mission, following a return to calm and the dismantling of all roadblocks.
- **Consul Generals from New Zealand, Australia, Japan and Vanuatu were invited to a briefing at the French High Commission at 18h on 24 May. This briefing was useful to confirm information already known to Post through the press.**<sup>s6(a)</sup>
- We have been informed that La Tontouta Airport, New Caledonia's international airport, will **likely not reopen for commercial flights before Thursday 30 May at the earliest.**
- While the situation appears to be stabilising, violence and clashes with security forces continue. As of Sunday 19 May, damage assessments estimate the cost at around XPF 40 billion (approximately NZ\$590 million). An estimated 2,000 jobs have also been impacted.

#### *In New Zealand*

- s9(2)(f)(iv)
- On Thursday 23 May, the Minister of Foreign Affairs posted on [Twitter/X](#) expressing frustration at the lack of approval for flights. This post has been reported by [NZ media](#). Cook Islands Prime Minister Mark Brown noted on [RNZ Morning Report](#) on Thursday 23 May the political unrest is 'deeply concerning to the [Pacific Islands] Forum family'.
- The Minister of Foreign Affairs held bilateral calls with the Prime Ministers of Tonga and Fiji on Wednesday 22 May, as members of the Pacific Islands Forum Troika, to discuss the evolving situation in New Caledonia.
- Minister Peters announced the first assisted departure flight in a [press release](#) on Tuesday 21 May and also spoke with [Checkpoint](#) and [Newstalk ZB](#). He has posted about subsequent flights on Twitter/X.
- A planned protest took place in front of the French Embassy in Wellington from 12pm – 1:30pm Wednesday 22 May, in support of Kanak people in New Caledonia. Around 50 people took part in the peaceful protest, which included around 10 speeches, "Kanak resistance" songs and chants in Te Reo Māori. New Zealand Police deployed officers to

monitor the protest and ensure the security of the Embassy. New Zealand media were present at the protest (RNZ).

## ANNEX: Full SitRep 23: New Caledonia Unrest – Saturday 25 May

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### Key media messages

- New Zealand is deeply concerned about the political unrest in New Caledonia, and we call for calm and dialogue to prevail.
- The safety of New Zealanders in New Caledonia is an urgent priority for us.
- A fourth NZDF flight from Noumea arrived in Auckland this afternoon with 57 passengers on board.
- We are aware of 108 New Zealanders remaining in New Caledonia who wish to depart.
- Seats on assisted departure flights have been prioritised based on two considerations – urgent needs and the ability for passengers to safely travel to central pick-up points in Nouméa.
- Our consular team continues to work with Australia on moving New Zealanders in other parts of New Caledonia into Nouméa to be ready for departure home on the next flights out.
- *[If asked about upcoming NZDF flights]:* We are working hard to finalise logistics for further NZDF flights in coming days.
- *[If asked about individual cases in the media]:* We are unable to comment on individual cases. We are continuing to be in touch directly with New Zealanders in New Caledonia who have indicated they wish to depart.

### **Media messages – Assisted departures and Consular response**

- New Zealanders are urged to keep their SafeTravel Registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their 'departure date' is updated.
- We have asked those registered on SafeTravel to let us know their interest in any potential further flight options. They will be contacted directly as flights are scheduled.
- New Zealanders in need of immediate consular assistance should contact the 24/7 Consular Emergency line on +64 99 20 20 20.
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia should stay in place and avoid all protests, monitor local media for developments, and comply with any instructions and restrictions issued by local authorities.
- Our staff in Wellington and Nouméa continue to conduct welfare checks on New Zealanders in New Caledonia.
- Officials are regularly speaking with New Caledonian authorities regarding airport operations and access, and ongoing needs in relation to critical supplies such as food and medicine.
- New Zealand's current travel advisory for all of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential travel** (Level 3 of 4). This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.
- We recommend that all travellers remain in contact with their airline for any updates on flight bookings. Travellers should also contact their travel insurance provider if travel has

been disrupted.

- *[If asked why the NZ Consulate in Nouméa is closed]* Due to the State of Emergency in New Caledonia, the New Zealand Consulate office is closed. Callers to the Consulate are being directed to New Zealand's 24/7 Consular Emergency line. A consular team is working on the ground to support New Zealanders to depart New Caledonia.

#### ***If asked media messages - assisted departure flights and consular response***

- *[If asked about people with priority needs:]* Based on our current information, the majority of people with prioritised needs who can safely travel to pick-up points have now been able to depart.
- *[If asked about plans to repatriate RSE workers from Vanuatu stuck in New Zealand following the collapse of Air Vanuatu on outbound assisted departure flights]:* We explored options to repatriate RSE workers to Vanuatu but unfortunately this was not possible due to flight logistics.
- *[If asked about other foreign nationals on NZDF flights]:* A small number of seats were offered to other nationals with urgent needs.
- s6(a)
- *If asked about transport on the ground/road access to airports, etc.]:* We continue to work with relevant authorities on the ground to understand security and access issues, including for travel to airports in Nouméa.

#### ***If asked media messages – Unrest in New Caledonia***

- *[If raised: independence of New Caledonia]* The question of independence is one for the people of New Caledonia to decide with France. We acknowledge that the political and economic situation in New Caledonia is challenging and reiterate calls on all Parties to find a solution. We hope that peace and calm will prevail.
- s6(a) The immediate priority must be for all sides to take steps to de-escalate the situation, so that there can be dialogue and calm. No matter your views on the political arrangements in New Caledonia, everyone should agree that violence is harmful to every community there.
- *[If raised: PIF comments on crisis]* We recognise and share the concern felt among Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) members at the recent violence. It is for individual countries to make their own assessments on the situation in New Caledonia. New Zealand has been very clear on the need for all sides to take steps to de-escalate, so that there can be dialogue and calm.
- *[If asked about the specifics of the potential NZDF deployments]:* We are not able to share details on specifics at this stage.

## Latest developments

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### Assisted Departures and Consular Response

- A C-130 departed Auckland Airport shortly after 8am this morning, to pick up 57 passengers from Noumea. <sup>s6(a)</sup>

The flight landed at  
Auckland International Airport at 1646h. In addition to New Zealanders, <sup>s6(a)</sup>
- We are making progress to confirm the following flights over the next three days:
  - Sunday – one C-130 flight leaving Noumea in the evening, carrying approximately 50 passengers. This operation could also involve the repatriation of up to 50 French nationals from Auckland to Noumea, expected to arrive in Noumea at 1600;
  - Monday – one C130 flight Noumea direct to Auckland, anticipated capacity of approximately 50 passengers; and
  - Tuesday – we may need to operate a further flight to repatriate the remaining New Zealand citizens and foreign nationals for whom we have consular responsibility.
- Due to significant unrest in the suburb of Kamere on Friday night, <sup>s6(a)</sup>
- A NZDF C-130 arrived into Auckland Airport just after 3pm Friday 24<sup>th</sup> May, carrying 49 passengers. In addition to New Zealanders, this flight include <sup>s6(a)</sup>
- Air New Zealand is supporting the onwards travel of passengers as needed when they arrive in Auckland.
- On its outbound journey from Whenuapai to Magenta airport yesterday, <sup>s6(a)</sup>
- 50 people were repatriated back to Auckland in the early hours of Thursday morning. A French military aircraft transported them from Nouméa to Brisbane, where they were met by a NZDF aircraft, which returned them to Auckland. 48 passengers were repatriated on Tuesday's NZDF-operated flight out of Nouméa direct to Auckland.
- Nationals from 14 countries have been evacuated on New Zealand flights to date (with the largest numbers being from <sup>s6(a)</sup> a – countries New Zealand has consular obligations/arrangements with – and from the Pacific Community secretariat). <sup>s6(a)</sup>

Some of these may depart  
this weekend on French flights to Singapore and Paris.
- We are prioritising departure of New Zealanders and foreign nationals for whom we have consular responsibility. Those with vulnerabilities will be prioritised accordingly. Other foreign nationals will be included in departure flights as space allows. As New Zealand Passport holders, Cook Islanders are included in our planning for New Zealanders.
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia continue to be updated and contacted through various means including regular SafeTravel messages, welfare checks by the New Zealand Consulate in Noumea, and calls/messages from MFAT's Emergency Crisis Centre.
- All travellers are being advised that they are responsible for accommodation and onward travel arrangements when they arrive in Auckland. For urgent cases, and when flights

arrive into New Zealand in the middle of the night, MFAT is working with MBIE's Temporary Accommodation Service to provide any urgent needs for families/travellers (on a cost-recovery basis). A family of five who arrived on Thursday morning's early flight was provided accommodation through this channel as they did not already have accommodation arranged in Auckland. The MFAT consular team on the flight from Brisbane to Auckland managed to reduce the number requiring MBIE temporary accommodation support from 12 passengers to five passengers.

- On Thursday 23 May, the Minister of Foreign Affairs posted on [Twitter/X](#) expressing frustration at the lack of approval for flights on Thursday. This post has been reported by [NZ media](#). s6(a)
- Minister Peters announced the first assisted departure flight in a [press release](#) on Tuesday 21 May and also spoke with [Checkpoint](#) and [Newstalk ZB](#). He has posted about subsequent flights on Twitter/X.

- s6(a)

- s6(b)(i)

- s6(b)(ii)

Officials advised that the New Zealander registers on SafeTravel and that requests for support for foreign nationals needs to be submitted by their respective governments.

- s6(a), s6(b)(i)

#### *In Nouméa*

- Local and New Zealand media are reporting a further death from the unrest; a 48 year old man who was shot by police yesterday (Friday 24 May). The death toll from the unrest now sits at seven people.
- We have been informed that La Tontouta Airport, New Caledonia's international airport, will likely not reopen for commercial flights before Thursday 30 May at the earliest.
- Consul Generals from New Zealand, Australia, Japan and Vanuatu were invited to a briefing at the French High Commission at 1800h on 24 May. This briefing was useful to confirm information already known to Post through the press. s6(a)

- s6(a)

- s6(a)



s6(a)

- s6(a)
- French President Macron held a press conference in Nouméa on 24 May. He said the French Government's objective was to restore calm and order as quickly as possible, and not give in to violence. Macron referred to the 'path of forgiveness' and the 'path to the future', the latter of which was blocked by riots and actions of delinquents, and the political disagreement on electoral reform. He asserted that the electoral reform has 'democratic legitimacy', but promised that it would not be 'forced through'.
- After a few weeks of calm, talks could begin, but this would be contingent on the lifting of remaining roadblocks and checkpoints. There would be a 'mediation and work mission' to work out an agreement with local stakeholders in the coming weeks. Macron hoped that the agreement could be 'put to a vote by the people of New Caledonia'.
- The subjects of future negotiations would include: the electoral body, the organisation of power, the distribution of seats, citizenship, inequalities, the economic future including the nickel industry, and the self-determination vote.
- Macron also announced the mobilisation of further French tactical units, including helicopters and armoured vehicles to be deployed in neighbourhoods still held by rioters.
- s6(a)

s6(a)

the situation appears to be stabilising, violence and clashes with security forces continue. As of Sunday 19 May, damage assessments estimate the cost at around XPF 40 billion (approximately NZ\$590 million). An estimated 2,000 jobs have also been impacted.

- The 6pm to 6am curfew will remain in force for the full duration of the state of emergency. This curfew covers the entire territory of New Caledonia.
- **In the immediate term, the French response remains focused on removing pockets of lawlessness (particularly in Ducos and Riviere Sale), restoring freedom of movement by removing barricades and hazards; restocking supermarkets, petrol stations and**

pharmacies, ensuring the efficient movement of supplies around New Caledonia; and supporting the function of health services, ensuring access is available to those in need.

- French officials have confirmed that there are sufficient provisions of food and medicine. Ministry officials have confirmed that supermarkets are being restocked with some food items.

#### *New Zealand's response*

- s6(a)
- s6(a)
- The Minister of Foreign Affairs held bilateral calls with the Prime Ministers of Tonga and Fiji, as members of the Pacific Islands Forum Troika to discuss the evolving situation in New Caledonia. MFA shared an update on [Twitter/X](#) of these calls.
- The Minister spoke with Pacific Islands Forum Chair Prime Minister Mark Brown on Saturday 18 May. The discussion included New Zealand's desire to work with Pacific partners to help calm the situation down, and the role of the PIF to facilitate dialogue and promote de-escalation in the region.
- Officials continue to work closely with Australia<sup>s6(a)</sup>  
Minister Peters held a trilateral call with the Foreign Ministers of France and Australia on Monday 20 May, reiterating the request for access for repatriation flights.
- s6(b)(i)
- Following the announcement of the first repatriation flight Minister Peters put out a [press release](#) announcing the assisted departure flight, and also [posted on twitter/X](#). He also shared an update on [Twitter/X](#) with pictures of those leaving New Caledonia and urging all New Zealanders in Nouméa to register on SafeTravel.
- A planned protest took place in front of the French Embassy in Wellington from 12pm – 1:30pm Wednesday 22 May. Around 50 people took part in the peaceful protest, and included around 10 speeches, “Kanaky resistance” songs and chants in Te Reo Māori. Journalists from RNZ were present as well as some Members of Parliament. In addition to French security, 3 local police officers were deployed and a liaison office to supervise the demonstration. The protestors warned there might be “other actions” but did not expand on what these might be.

#### *Consular*

- Following today's assisted departure, we are aware of 108 New Zealanders remaining in New Caledonia who wish to depart.
  - 92 are in locations where they are able to get to the assembly point
  - 16 are in locations that make reaching the meeting point difficult
  - 3 are considered 'Medicals'. 2 of them are in the category of 'cannot reach meeting point'
  - 2 are NZ citizens travelling on foreign passports

- o 42 are travelling on foreign passports.
- New Zealanders are urged to keep their SafeTravel Registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their 'departure date' is updated.
- New Zealand's current travel advisory for all of New Caledonia is Level 3 (out of 4) **"Avoid non-essential travel"**.
- Post and Consular Call Centre staff continue to conduct welfare checks on Kiwis in New Caledonia.
- New Zealand has formal consular obligations to Switzerland, Netherlands, and Samoa.  
s6(a)

#### Staff welfare

- MFAT staff in Nouméa are all reported safe and well.
- s9(2)(a)

#### Contacts

- The MFAT Emergency Coordination Centre will operate from 8am-8pm daily and through the weekend. Please direct emails to:
  - o Incident controller [Nouméa.Controller@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Nouméa.Controller@mfat.govt.nz)
  - o Response manager [Nouméa.ResponseManager@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Nouméa.ResponseManager@mfat.govt.nz)
  - o Consular response manager [Nouméa.ConsularRM@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Nouméa.ConsularRM@mfat.govt.nz)
  - o Intel [Nouméa.Intel@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Nouméa.Intel@mfat.govt.nz)
  - o Ministerial liaison [Nouméa.MinLiaison@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Nouméa.MinLiaison@mfat.govt.nz)

#### Media comments by other Leaders

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- International media **are continuing** to report on the situation in New Caledonia. Outlets [including BBC, CNN and Al Jazeera](#) covered our first assisted departure flight.
- [Cook Islands Prime Minister Mark Brown](#) noted on RNZ Morning Report on Thursday 23 May the political unrest is 'deeply concerning to the [Pacific Islands] Forum family'. The PIF call is for 'peace and order to prevail so that we can actually engage in genuine dialogue and through the Pacific way of talanoa.' Full interview [here](#).
- [New Caledonian representative in the French National Assembly Nicolas Metzdorf](#)<sup>s6(a)</sup> returned to New Caledonia last night on board a French military plane. In a radio interview on Monday 20 May, Metzdorf labelled the CCAT a "terrorist organisation" and also criticised the state for not being prepared for the current situation. Metzdorf also stated his view that the legislative process to open the electoral roll had to continue; if not it would be giving in to the CCAT, and would mean that their actions had been successful.
- [On Friday CCAT \(an independence political party\) issued a statement](#) calling for "a time of calm to break the spiral of violence". The CCAT issued a new communiqué at midday on Friday. "In the face of the State's stubborn determination to impose constitutional change, we denounce the State's irresponsibility and hold it responsible for the loss of human life, the atrocities and the devastation of the country's economic fabric." The CCAT says it is deeply affected by the loss of these lives, "those of our young people murdered by militias backed by the State and non-independence leaders, and that of the young gendarme". In this press release, the cell coordinating field actions calls for appeasement. "A time for appeasement to halt the escalation of violence." He added: "It's a break in our fight. It

expresses the CCAT's determination to preserve life. We're keeping up the pressure through our presence at phase 2.5 on the ground, maintaining filtering traffic for all citizens."

- Roch Wamytan, President of the Congress of New Caledonia said "The context" is not favourable to "discussions with the President of the Republic", after the cancellation of the videoconference proposed to Caledonian elected representatives by Emmanuel Macron. "How can you discuss with the President of the Republic under these conditions?" he continued. "We accepted the principle of discussions, except that to be able to meet the President of the Republic and listen to what he had to say to us, it was normal to prepare in advance. For me, it wasn't possible to do that today."
- French Justice Minister Eric Dupond-Moretti has called on prosecutors to "take the strongest possible action against the perpetrators of the violence" and also indicated he was considering transferring the "criminals" to mainland France.
- French Home Affairs and Overseas minister Gérald Darmanin told public TV channel France 2 he had placed 10 leaders of the CCAT (an organisation linked with FLNKS) under home detention. "This is a Mafia-like body which I do not amalgamate with political pro-independence parties...[CCAT] is a group that claims itself to be pro-independence and commits looting, murders and violence," "I have numerous elements which show this is a Mafia-like, violent organisation that loots stores and shoots real bullets at (French) gendarmes, sets businesses on fire and attacks even pro-independence institutions." "Massive reinforcements were to arrive shortly and the French state would "totally regain control", he said.
- The National Council of Chiefs of the Indigenous Kanak condemned "all acts of vandalism and gun violence", but rejected the allegations that the pro-independence movement was involved in the deadly violence. Grand Chief Hippolyte Sinewami-Htamumu expressed full support for the pro-independence group, which has mobilised more than a hundred thousand people "of all ages and from all backgrounds" in peaceful protests in recent months in the capital, Nouméa, and throughout the island. "This is not a 'terrorist group' or 'mafia group', as certain political leaders want us to believe."
- Romuald Pidjo, from the CCAT's [a pro-independence political group] Kanak delegation in Paris, on the anger of young people in Nouméa's working-class neighbourhoods [where some of the worst violence has taken place]. "These are people who are very disadvantaged, people who have been left behind. And what do they see, all these people, every day? They see people who've come from mainland France, who have big cars. And they have nothing! The straw that broke the camel's back was this constitutional bill in which the state is going to say: 'We're going to continue to bring in people who are going to crush you, who are going to take everything in this country'."
- Leaders of a Kanak Workers Union in Paris appealed for calm and said they were deeply saddened by deaths in their faraway homeland. "We wish to see the French government make a strong political statement rather than send troops," union leader Rock Haocas told reporters. "Starting a conversation would be a strong political statement."
- Cook Islands Prime Minister Mark Brown (and outgoing PIF Chair) said greater autonomy for the indigenous Kanak population is needed. "If there's one thing that specific countries value, it is the sovereignty and independence. To be able to have control over the destiny of your own country." "My initial view of the unrest that's occurring in Caledonia, it is cause to recognise greater autonomy and greater independence from the people on those islands. "As a member of the Forum now, we will be able to provide support assistance to these member countries as to the best way forward without trying to try to avoid any escalation of conflict."
- Henry Puna, outgoing Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum told journalists at his

final news conference that "to see the collapse [and], protesting is very unfortunate", but it was predictable. He said the issue "has been boiling" since the 2021 independence referendum in the French territory, the third and final vote under the Nouméa Accord, which was boycotted by the pro-indigenous Kanak population. He said he was there in December 2021 to monitor the independence referendum when it was taken and "it was unfortunate that it was allowed to go ahead during that time". "We were in the middle of [the] Covid [pandemic] and the Kanak custom is that when somebody passes they mourn that for one year. So they weren't allowed that freedom. "As a result, they didn't want to take part in the referendum because they couldn't go against their tradition and go campaigning or do other work. That's disrespectful for the custom."

- Vanuatu's prime minister, Charlot Salwai (also chairman of the Melanesian Spearhead Group, which also includes Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands) said the indiscriminate destruction of property would affect New Caledonia's economy in a big way and have a cascading effect on the lives of all New Caledonians, including Kanaks. He said France should establish dialogue with FLNKS, which has condemned the violence, and annul the constitutional reform that sparked the crisis. "These events could have been avoided if the French government had listened."
- Australia's foreign affairs minister, Penny Wong, said Australians were advised to reconsider their need to travel to New Caledonia due to "civil unrest, travel disruption and limited essential services". "Again I repeat and take this opportunity to repeat Australia's call for calm. We respect and support the referendum process ... and the discussions under way between all parties, and encourage all parties to work together cooperatively to shape the future of New Caledonia."
- Labour Party Deputy Leader Carmel Sepuloni said the growing unrest was a concern. At last year's Pacific Islands Forum, French Polynesian representatives were already expressing concern about how some policies from the French government might affect its indigenous population, she said.

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**Subject:** FORMAL MESSAGE: SITREP 24: NEW CALEDONIA UNREST - SUNDAY 26 MAY  
**Date:** Sunday, 26 May 2024 11:03:17 am

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[RESTRICTED]

## Executive Summary SitRep 24: New Caledonia Unrest – Sunday 26 May

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### Key media messages

- New Zealand is deeply concerned about the political unrest in New Caledonia, and we call for calm and dialogue to prevail.
- The safety of New Zealanders in New Caledonia is an urgent priority for us.
- An NZDF flight is scheduled to travel to Nouméa later today (Sunday) to return another group of passengers to New Zealand. Yesterday, 57 passengers arrived back in Auckland on an NZDF flight from New Caledonia.
- We are aware of 108 New Zealanders remaining in New Caledonia who wish to depart.
- Seats on assisted departure flights have been prioritised based on two considerations — urgent needs and the ability for passengers to safely travel to central pick-up points in Nouméa.
- Our consular team continues to work on options for New Zealanders in other parts of New Caledonia to travel into Nouméa to be ready for departure home on the next flights out.
- *[If asked for details on upcoming NZDF flights]:* We are working hard to finalise logistics for NZDF flights in coming days.
- *[If asked about individual cases in the media]:* We are unable to comment on individual cases. We are continuing to be in touch directly with New Zealanders in New Caledonia who have indicated they wish to depart.

s9(2)(g)(i)

### *Assisted Departures and Consular Response*

- An NZDF C-130 landed at Auckland just before 5pm on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup>, bringing 57 passengers back to New Zealand. The outbound journey carried <sup>s6(a)</sup> French passengers for repatriation to New Caledonia.
- <sup>s6(a)</sup>
- Officials are making progress to confirm the following flights over the next three days:
  - Today 26 May – one C-130 will depart Auckland International Airport for Nouméa this afternoon with approximately <sup>s6(a)</sup> French nationals on board. It is planned to depart Nouméa at 5pm local time, with up to 60 passengers (New Zealanders and foreign nationals) on board.
  - Monday 27 May – we are planning for one C-130 flight, which could repatriate French nationals to Nouméa, and bring up to 60 New Zealanders and other foreign nationals to Auckland.

- Tuesday 28 May – we are planning for one C-130 flight, which could repatriate French nationals to Nouméa, and bring up to 60 New Zealanders and other foreign nationals to Auckland.
- If needed, we may be able to secure seats for New Zealanders on a French-operated flight to Brisbane on Wednesday 29 May.
- Details of the assisted departures from Nouméa to Auckland so far:

	Date	Operator - Route	TOTAL PAX*	NZers**	Foreign Nationals
Flight 1	Tuesday 21 May	NZDF C-130 Nouméa - Auckland	<b>43</b>	37	s6(a)
Flight 2	Wednesday 22 May	French flight Nouméa - Brisbane; NZDF B757 Brisbane - Auckland	<b>49</b>	44	
Flight 3	Friday 24 May	NZDF C-130 Nouméa - Auckland	<b>49</b>	42	
Flight 4	Saturday 25 May	NZDF C-130 Nouméa - Auckland	<b>57</b>	48	
			<b>198</b>	171	

\*PAX numbers excludes MFAT & other agency staff/family

\*\*NZ citizens, Permanent Residents, and dual nationals

- In recent days there have been few options available for New Zealanders in more remote parts of New Caledonia to travel to Nouméa. Officials have been working to find options to bring these citizens to Nouméa for repatriation. On Friday 24 May, French officials acknowledged New Zealand's strong desire to assist its citizens to depart New Caledonia. They signalled they expect to have puma helicopters available in a few days that can assist us to collect people from remote areas.
- Following the Saturday 25 May assisted departure flight, 108 New Zealanders remain in New Caledonia who wish to depart.
  - 92 are in locations where they are able to get to the assembly point
  - 16 are in locations that make reaching the meeting point difficult
  - 3 are considered 'Medicals', i.e. individuals who require regular access to medication and are at risk of running out. 2 of them are in the category of 'cannot reach meeting point'
  - 2 are NZ citizens travelling on foreign passports
- s6(a), s6(b)(i)

- s6(a), s6(b)(i)
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia continue to be updated and contacted through various means including regular SafeTravel messages, welfare checks by the New Zealand Consulate in Nouméa, and calls/messages from MFAT's Emergency Coordination Centre.
- Nationals from 14 countries have been transported on New Zealand flights to date. s6(a)  
We are prioritising departure of New Zealanders and foreign nationals for whom we have consular responsibility.
- The NZDF outbound journey from Whenuapai to Magenta airport on Friday s6(a)
- New Zealand's current travel advisory for all of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential travel** (Level 3 of 4). This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.

#### *In Nouméa*

- The death toll from the unrest now sits at seven people. A 48 year old man was shot by police on Friday 24 May.
- French President Macron held a press conference in Nouméa on 24 May, calling for a return to calm and providing an overview on the next steps for dialogue. This will involve a mediation mission, following a return to calm and the dismantling of all roadblocks.
- Consul Generals from New Zealand, Australia, Japan and Vanuatu were invited to a briefing at the French High Commission on 24 May. This briefing was useful to confirm information already known to MFAT through the press. s6(a)
- We have been informed that La Tontouta Airport, New Caledonia's international airport, will likely not reopen for commercial flights before Thursday 30 May at the earliest.

## ANNEX: Full SitRep 24: New Caledonia Unrest – Sunday 26 May

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### Key media messages

- New Zealand is deeply concerned about the political unrest in New Caledonia, and we call for calm and dialogue to prevail.
- The safety of New Zealanders in New Caledonia is an urgent priority for us.
- An NZDF flight is scheduled to travel to Nouméa later today (Sunday) to uplift and return another group of passengers to New Zealand. Yesterday, 57 passengers arrived back in Auckland on an NZDF flight from New Caledonia.
- We are aware of 108 New Zealanders remaining in New Caledonia who wish to depart.
- Seats on assisted departure flights have been prioritised based on two considerations – urgent needs and the ability for passengers to safely travel to central pick-up points in Nouméa.
- Our consular team continues to work with Australia, the French authorities and local government on moving New Zealanders in other parts of New Caledonia into Nouméa to be ready for assisted departure.
- *[If asked about upcoming NZDF flights]:* We are working hard to finalise logistics for further NZDF flights in coming days.
- *[If asked about individual cases in the media]:* We are unable to comment on individual cases. We are continuing to be in touch directly with New Zealanders in New Caledonia who have indicated they wish to depart.

### **Media messages – Assisted departures and Consular response**

- New Zealanders are urged to keep their SafeTravel Registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their 'departure date' is updated.



- We have asked those registered on SafeTravel to let us know their interest in any potential further flight options. They will be contacted directly as flights are scheduled.
- New Zealanders in need of immediate consular assistance should contact the 24/7 Consular Emergency line on +64 99 20 20 20.
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia should stay in place and avoid all protests, monitor local media for developments, and comply with any instructions and restrictions issued by local authorities.
- Our staff in Wellington and Nouméa continue to conduct welfare checks on New Zealanders in New Caledonia.
- Officials are regularly speaking with New Caledonian authorities regarding airport operations and access, and ongoing needs in relation to critical supplies such as food and medicine.
- New Zealand's current travel advisory for all of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential travel** (Level 3 of 4). This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.
- We recommend that all travellers remain in contact with their airline for any updates on flight bookings. Travellers should also contact their travel insurance provider if travel has been disrupted.
- *[If asked why the NZ Consulate in Nouméa is closed]* Due to the State of Emergency in New Caledonia, the New Zealand Consulate office is closed. Callers to the Consulate are being directed to New Zealand's 24/7 Consular Emergency line. A consular team is working on the ground to support New Zealanders to depart New Caledonia.

#### ***If asked media messages - assisted departure flights and consular response***

- *[If asked about people with priority needs:]* Based on our current information, the majority of people with prioritised needs who can safely travel to pick-up points have now been able to depart.
- *[If asked about other foreign nationals on NZDF flights:]* A small number of seats were offered to other nationals with urgent needs.
- s6(a)
- *If asked about transport on the ground/road access to airports, etc.]:* We continue to work with relevant authorities on the ground to understand security and access issues, including for travel to airports in Nouméa.

#### ***If asked media messages – Unrest in New Caledonia***

- *[If raised: independence of New Caledonia]* The question of independence is one for the people of New Caledonia to decide with France. We acknowledge that the political and economic situation in New Caledonia is challenging and reiterate calls on all Parties to find a solution. We hope that peace and calm will prevail.
- s6(a) The immediate priority must be for all sides to take steps to de-escalate the situation, so that there can be dialogue and calm. No matter your views on the political arrangements in New Caledonia, everyone should agree that violence is harmful to every community there.
- *[If raised: PIF comments on crisis]* We recognise and share the concern felt among Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) members at the recent violence. It is for individual countries to make their own assessments on the situation in New Caledonia. New Zealand has been very clear on the need for all sides to take steps to de-escalate, so that there can be dialogue and calm.
- *[If asked about the specifics of the potential NZDF deployments:]* We are not able to share details on specifics at this stage.

#### Latest developments

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s9(2)(g)(i)

- An NZDF C-130 landed at Auckland just before 5pm on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup>, bringing 57 passengers back to New Zealand. The outbound flight carried <sup>s6(a)</sup> French passengers for repatriation to New Caledonia, <sup>s6(a)</sup> In addition to New Zealanders, <sup>s6(a)</sup>

- <sup>s6(a)</sup>

- Officials are making progress to confirm the following flights over the next three days:
  - Today 26 May – one C-130 will depart Auckland International Airport for Nouméa this afternoon with approximately <sup>s6(a)</sup> French nationals on board. It is planned to depart Nouméa at 5pm local time, with up to 60 passengers (New Zealanders and foreign nationals) on board.
  - Monday 27 May – we are planning for one C-130 flight, which could repatriate French nationals to Nouméa, and bring up to 60 New Zealanders and other foreign nationals to Auckland.
  - Tuesday 28 May – we are planning for one C-130 flight, which could repatriate French nationals to Nouméa, and bring up to 60 New Zealanders and other foreign nationals to Auckland.
- If needed, we may be able to secure seats for New Zealanders on a French-operated flight to Brisbane on Wednesday 29 May.

- <sup>s6(a)</sup>

- Due to significant unrest in the suburb of Kamere on Friday night, <sup>s6(a)</sup>

- A NZDF C-130 arrived into Auckland Airport just after 3pm Friday 24<sup>th</sup> May, carrying 49 passengers. In addition to New Zealanders, this flight <sup>s6(a)</sup>

- Air New Zealand is supporting the onwards travel of passengers as needed when they arrive in Auckland.

- 50 people were repatriated back to Auckland in the early hours of Thursday morning. A French military aircraft transported them from Nouméa to Brisbane, where they were met by a NZDF aircraft, which returned them to Auckland. 48 passengers were repatriated on Tuesday's NZDF-operated flight out of Nouméa direct to Auckland.

- Nationals from 14 countries have been evacuated on New Zealand flights to date (with the largest numbers being from <sup>s6(a)</sup> – countries New Zealand has consular obligations/arrangements with – and from SPC (the Pacific Community)). <sup>s6(a)</sup>

Some of these may depart this weekend on French flights to Singapore and Paris.

- We are prioritising departure of New Zealanders and foreign nationals for whom we have consular responsibility. Those with vulnerabilities will be prioritised accordingly. Other foreign nationals will

be included in departure flights as space allows. As New Zealand Passport holders, Cook Islanders are included in our planning for New Zealanders.

- New Zealanders in New Caledonia continue to be updated and contacted through various means including regular SafeTravel messages, welfare checks by the New Zealand Consulate in Nouméa, and calls/messages from MFAT's Emergency Crisis Centre.
- All travellers are being advised that they are responsible for accommodation and onward travel arrangements when they arrive in Auckland. For urgent cases, and when flights arrive into New Zealand in the middle of the night, MFAT is working with MBIE's Temporary Accommodation Service (on a cost-recovery basis). A family of five who arrived on Thursday morning's early flight was provided accommodation through this channel.

- s6(a)

- s6(b)(i)

- s6(b)(ii)

Officials advised that the New Zealander registers on SafeTravel and that requests for foreign nationals need to be submitted by their respective governments.

- s6(a), s6(b)(i)

#### *In Nouméa*

- The death toll from the unrest now sits at seven people, after a man was shot by a police officer on Friday 24 May.
- We have been informed that La Tontouta Airport, New Caledonia's international airport, will likely not reopen for commercial flights before Thursday 30 May at the earliest.
- Consul Generals from New Zealand, Australia, Japan and Vanuatu were invited to a briefing at the French High Commission on 24 May. This briefing was useful to confirm information already known to MFAT through the press. s6(a)

- s6(b)(i)

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- French President Macron held a press conference in Nouméa on 24 May. He said the French Government's objective was to restore calm and order as quickly as possible, and not give in to violence. Macron referred to the 'path of forgiveness' and the 'path to the future', the latter of which was blocked by riots and actions of delinquents, and the political disagreement on electoral

reform. He asserted that the electoral reform has 'democratic legitimacy', but promised that it would not be 'forced through'.

- After a few weeks of calm, talks could begin, but this would be contingent on the lifting of remaining roadblocks and checkpoints. There would be a 'mediation and work mission' to work out an agreement with local stakeholders in the coming weeks. Macron hoped that the agreement could be 'put to a vote by the people of New Caledonia'.
- The subjects of future negotiations would include: the electoral body, the organisation of power, the distribution of seats, citizenship, inequalities, the economic future including the nickel industry, and the self-determination vote.
- Macron also announced the mobilisation of further French tactical units, including helicopters and armoured vehicles to be deployed in neighbourhoods still held by rioters.
- s6(a)

- s6(a)

- The 6pm to 6am curfew will remain in force for the full duration of the state of emergency. This curfew covers the entire territory of New Caledonia.
- In the immediate term, the French response remains focused on removing pockets of lawlessness (particularly in Ducos and Riviere Sale), restoring freedom of movement by removing barricades and hazards; restocking supermarkets, petrol stations and pharmacies, ensuring the efficient movement of supplies around New Caledonia; and supporting the function of health services, ensuring access is available to those in need.
- French officials have confirmed that there are sufficient provisions of food and medicine. Ministry officials have confirmed that supermarkets are being restocked with some food items.

*In New Zealand*

- s6(a)

- s6(a)

- s6(a)

- A planned protest took place in front of the French Embassy in Wellington from 12pm – 1:30pm Wednesday 22 May. Around 50 people took part in the peaceful protest, and included around 10 speeches, "Kanaky resistance" songs and chants in Te Reo Māori. Journalists from RNZ were present as well as some Members of Parliament. In addition to French security, local police officers were deployed and a liaison office to supervise the demonstration. The protestors warned there might be

“other actions” but did not expand on what these might be.

#### *Consular*

- Following Saturday’s assisted departure, we are aware of 108 New Zealanders remaining in New Caledonia who wish to depart.
  - 92 are in locations where they are able to get to the assembly point
  - 16 are in locations that make reaching the meeting point difficult
  - 3 are considered ‘Medicals’ i.e. **individuals who require regular access to medication and are at risk of running out**. 2 of them are in the category of ‘cannot reach meeting point’
  - 2 are NZ citizens travelling on foreign passports
- New Zealanders are urged to keep their SafeTravel Registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their ‘departure date’ is updated.
- New Zealand’s current travel advisory for all of New Caledonia is Level 3 (out of 4) **“Avoid non-essential travel”**. Post and Consular Call Centre staff continue to conduct welfare checks on Kiwis in New Caledonia.
- New Zealand has formal consular obligations to Switzerland, Netherlands, and Samoa.<sup>s6(a)</sup>

#### *Staff welfare*

- MFAT staff in Nouméa are all reported safe and well.
- s9(2)(a)

#### *Contacts*

- The MFAT Emergency Coordination Centre will operate from 8am-8pm daily and through the weekend. Please direct emails to:
  - Incident controller [Nouméa.Controller@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Nouméa.Controller@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Response manager [Nouméa.ResponseManager@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Nouméa.ResponseManager@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Consular response manager [Nouméa.ConsularRM@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Nouméa.ConsularRM@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Intel [Nouméa.Intel@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Nouméa.Intel@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Ministerial liaison [Nouméa.MinLiaison@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Nouméa.MinLiaison@mfat.govt.nz)

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**From:** Noumea.Intel <[Noumea.Intel@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.Intel@mfat.govt.nz)>

**Sent:** Sunday, May 26, 2024 7:16:51 PM

**To:** NOUMEA <[NOU@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:NOU@mfat.govt.nz)>; PACPF <[PACPF@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:PACPF@mfat.govt.nz)>; DCE <[DCE@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:DCE@mfat.govt.nz)>; ...PACIFIC POSTS <[PACIFICPOSTS@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:PACIFICPOSTS@mfat.govt.nz)>; DS AAG <[DM-DSAAG@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:DM-DSAAG@mfat.govt.nz)>; DS EMA <[DM-DSEMA@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:DM-DSEMA@mfat.govt.nz)>; DS MLG <[DM-DSMLG@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:DM-DSMLG@mfat.govt.nz)>; AUS <[DM-AUS@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:DM-AUS@mfat.govt.nz)>; EUR <[DM-EUR@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:DM-EUR@mfat.govt.nz)>; ISED <[DM-ISED@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:DM-ISED@mfat.govt.nz)>; SORD Security <[DM-SEC@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:DM-SEC@mfat.govt.nz)>; CON <[DM-CONS@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:DM-CONS@mfat.govt.nz)>; PARIS <[PAR@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:PAR@mfat.govt.nz)>; FM.P/S MFA (Seemail) <[PS.MFA@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:PS.MFA@mfat.govt.nz)>; FM.P/S Associate MFA (Seemail) <[PSAssociateMFASeemail@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:PSAssociateMFASeemail@mfat.govt.nz)>; FM.Defence (Seemail) <[fm.defence@nzdf.mil.nz](mailto:fm.defence@nzdf.mil.nz)>; FM.DPMC (FPA) (Seemail)

<DPMC@mfat.govt.nz>; FM.Police (Seemail) <Registry.NIC@police.govt.nz>;<sup>s6(a)</sup>  
FM.Police (Seemail) <Registry.NIC@police.govt.nz>;  
FM.Customs Service (Seemail) <cables@customs.govt.nz>; PACMM <PACMM@mfat.govt.nz>; PACREG  
<PACREG@mfat.govt.nz>; PHM <PHM@mfat.govt.nz>; DEVPP <DM-DEVPP@mfat.govt.nz>; DEVECO  
<DM-DEVECO@mfat.govt.nz>; ...EUROPEAN POSTS <EUROPEANPOSTS@mfat.govt.nz>; SAPD <DM-  
SAPD@mfat.govt.nz>; PRD <DM-PRD@mfat.govt.nz>; AMD <DM-AMD@mfat.govt.nz>  
**Subject:** FORMAL MESSAGE: SITREP 25: NEW CALEDONIA UNREST - SUNDAY 26 MAY

**[SEEMAIL] [RESTRICTED]**

Executive Summary SitRep 25: New Caledonia Unrest — Sunday 26 May

Key media messages

- New Zealand is deeply concerned about the political unrest in New Caledonia, and we call for calm and dialogue to prevail.
- The safety of New Zealanders in New Caledonia is an urgent priority for us.
- An NZDF flight is due to arrive in Auckland at on Sunday 26 May at 8:45pm carrying 60 passengers from New Caledonia.
- Following today's flight, we are aware of 48 New Zealanders remaining in New Caledonia who wish to depart.
- Seats on assisted departure flights have been prioritised based on two considerations — urgent needs and the ability for passengers to safely travel to central pick-up points in Nouméa.
- Almost all New Zealanders wanting to depart have now relocated to Noumea.
- *[If asked for details on upcoming NZDF flights]:* We are working hard to finalise logistics for NZDF flights in coming days.
- *[If asked about individual cases in the media]:* We are unable to comment on individual cases. We are continuing to be in touch directly with New Zealanders in New Caledonia who have indicated they wish to depart.

s9(2)(g)(i)

*Assisted Departures and Consular Response*

- A C-130 is currently returning to Auckland from New Caledonia, with 60 passengers on board s9(2)(g)(i)
- We plan two remaining flights:
  - Monday 27 May – one C-130 flight to bring up to 60 New Zealanders and other foreign nationals to Auckland.
  - Tuesday 28 May – same operation as Monday 27 May. This flight will also bring back NZDF/MFAT personnel deployed to support assisted departures.
- If needed, we may be able to secure seats for any remaining New Zealanders on the French flight to Brisbane on Wednesday 29 May.
- Summary of the five assisted departures from Nouméa to Auckland so far:

TOTAL PAX*	NZers**	Foreign Nationals
258	223	<sup>s6(a)</sup>

\*PAX numbers excludes MFAT & other agency staff/family

\*\*NZ citizens, Permanent Residents, and dual nationals

- Following the **Sunday 26 May** assisted departure flight, **48** New Zealanders remain in New Caledonia who wish to depart.
  - **47** are in locations where they are able to get to the assembly point
  - **1** is in a location that make reaching the meeting point difficult
  - **2** are NZ citizens travelling on foreign passports
- s6(b)(i)
- 
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia continue to be updated and contacted through various means, including regular SafeTravel messages, welfare checks by the New Zealand Consulate in Nouméa, and calls/messages from MFAT's Emergency Coordination Centre.
- New Zealand's current travel advisory for all of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential travel** (Level 3 of 4). This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.

*In Nouméa*

- The death toll from the unrest is seven.
- We have been informed that La Tontouta Airport, New Caledonia's international airport, will likely not reopen for commercial flights before Thursday 30 May at the earliest.
- s6(a), s6(b)(i)

## ANNEX: Full SitRep 25: New Caledonia Unrest — Sunday 26 May

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### Key media messages

- New Zealand is deeply concerned about the political unrest in New Caledonia, and we call for calm and dialogue to prevail.
- The safety of New Zealanders in New Caledonia is an urgent priority for us.
- **An NZDF flight is due to arrive in Auckland at on Sunday 26 May at 8:45pm this evening carrying 60 passengers from New Caledonia.**
- **Following today's flight, we are aware of 48 New Zealanders remaining in New Caledonia who wish to depart.**
- Seats on assisted departure flights have been prioritised based on two considerations — urgent needs and the ability for passengers to safely travel to central pick-up points in Nouméa.
- *[If asked about upcoming NZDF flights]:* We are working hard to finalise logistics for further NZDF flights in coming days.
- *[If asked about individual cases in the media]:* We are unable to comment on individual cases. We are continuing to be in touch directly with New Zealanders in New Caledonia who have indicated they wish to depart.



### **Media messages — assisted departures and consular response**

- New Zealanders are urged to keep their SafeTravel Registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their 'departure date' is updated.
- We have asked those registered on SafeTravel to let us know their interest in any potential further flight options. They will be contacted directly as flights are scheduled.
- New Zealanders in need of immediate consular assistance should contact the 24/7 Consular Emergency line on +64 99 20 20 20.
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia should stay in place and avoid all protests, monitor local media for developments, and comply with any instructions and restrictions issued by local authorities.
- Our staff in Wellington and Nouméa continue to conduct welfare checks on New Zealanders in New Caledonia.
- New Zealand's current travel advisory for all of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential travel** (Level 3 of 4). This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.
- We recommend that all travellers remain in contact with their airline for any updates on flight bookings. Travellers should also contact their travel insurance provider if travel has been disrupted.
- *[If asked why the NZ Consulate in Nouméa is closed]:* Due to the State of Emergency in New Caledonia, the New Zealand Consulate office is closed. Callers to the Consulate are being directed to New Zealand's 24/7 Consular Emergency line. A consular team is working on the ground to support New Zealanders to depart New Caledonia.

### **If asked media messages — assisted departure flights and consular response**

- *[If asked about people with priority needs]:* Based on our current information, the majority of people with prioritised needs who can safely travel to pick-up points have now been able to depart.
- *[If asked about other foreign nationals on NZDF flights]:* A small number of seats were offered to other nationals with urgent needs.
- s6(a)

### **If asked media messages — unrest in New Caledonia**

- *[If raised: independence of New Caledonia]:* The question of independence is one for the people of New Caledonia to decide with France. We acknowledge that the political and economic situation in New Caledonia is challenging and reiterate calls on all Parties to find a solution. We hope that peace and calm will prevail.
- s6(a) The immediate priority must be for all sides to take steps to de-escalate the situation, so that there can be dialogue and calm. No matter your views on the political arrangements in New Caledonia, everyone should agree that violence is harmful to every community there.
- *[If raised: PIF comments on crisis]:* We recognise and share the concern felt among Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) members at the recent violence. It is for individual countries to make their own assessments on the situation in New Caledonia. New Zealand has been very clear on the need for all sides to take steps to de-escalate, so that there can be dialogue and calm.

### **Latest developments —<sup>s9(2)(g)(i)</sup>**

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#### *Assisted Departures and Consular Response*

- **A C-130 is currently returning to Auckland, with 60 passengers on board from New Caledonia.**  
s9(2)(g)(i)
- Officials are making progress to confirm the following flights over the next two days:

- o Monday 27 May – we are planning for one C-130 flight, which will bring up to 60 New Zealanders and other foreign nationals to Auckland.
- o Tuesday 28 May – we are planning for one C-130 flight, which could repatriate French nationals to Nouméa, and bring up to 60 New Zealanders and other foreign nationals to Auckland.
- If needed, we may be able to secure seats for New Zealanders on a French-operated flight to Brisbane on Wednesday 29 May.

	Date	Operator - Route	French nationals repatriated to New Caledonia on outbound journey s6(a)	Total people transported to New Zealand*	New Zealanders**	Foreign Nationals
Flight 1	Tuesday 21 <sup>st</sup>	NZDF C-130 Nouméa - Auckland				
Flight 2	Wednesday 22 <sup>nd</sup>	French flight Nouméa - Brisbane; NZDF B757 Brisbane - Auckland				
Flight 3	Friday 24 <sup>th</sup>	NZDF C-130 Nouméa - Auckland				
Flight 4	Saturday 25 <sup>th</sup>	NZDF C-130 Nouméa - Auckland				
Flight 5	Sunday 26 <sup>th</sup>	NZDF C-130 Nouméa - Auckland				
<b>TOTALS</b>						

\*PAX numbers excludes MFAT & other agency staff/family

\*\*NZ citizens, Permanent Residents, and dual nationals

- Following today's assisted departure, we are aware of 48 New Zealanders remaining in New Caledonia who wish to depart.
  - o 47 are in locations where they are able to get to the assembly point
  - o 1 is in a location that make reaching the meeting point difficult
  - o 2 are NZ citizens travelling on foreign passports
- s6(a)
- s6(a)
- Nationals from 14 countries have been evacuated on New Zealand flights to date (with the largest numbers being from s6(a) – countries New Zealand has consular obligations/s6(a) with – and from SPC (the Pacific Community)). We still have requests for assistance from a number of countries and will endeavour to accommodate as many of these as possible on the two remaining flights.
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia continue to be updated and contacted through various means including regular SafeTravel messages, welfare checks by the New Zealand Consulate in Nouméa, and calls/messages from MFAT's Emergency Coordination Centre.
- All travellers are being advised that they are responsible for accommodation and onward travel

arrangements when they arrive in Auckland. For urgent cases MFAT is working with MBIE's Temporary Accommodation Service (on a cost-recovery basis).

- s6(a)

#### *In Nouméa*

- The death toll from the unrest now sits at seven people, after a man was shot by a police officer on Friday 24 May.
- We have been informed that La Tontouta Airport, New Caledonia's international airport, will likely not reopen for commercial flights before Thursday 30 May at the earliest.
- s6(a), s6(b)(i)

- The 6pm to 6am curfew will remain in force for the full duration of the state of emergency. This curfew covers the entire territory of New Caledonia.
- In the immediate term, the French response remains focused on removing pockets of lawlessness, restoring freedom of movement by removing barricades and hazards; restocking supermarkets, petrol stations and pharmacies, ensuring the efficient movement of supplies; and supporting the function of health services.
- French officials have confirmed that there are sufficient provisions of food and medicine. Supermarkets are being restocked with some food items.

#### *In New Zealand*

- Officials are preparing advice for the Minister of Foreign Affairs early next week on longer term options for political dialogue.

#### *Staff welfare*

- MFAT staff in Nouméa are all reported safe and well.

#### *Contacts*

- The MFAT Emergency Coordination Centre will operate from 8am-8pm daily and through the weekend. Please direct emails to:
  - Incident controller [Nouméa.Controller@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Nouméa.Controller@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Response manager [Nouméa.ResponseManager@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Nouméa.ResponseManager@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Consular response manager [Nouméa.ConsularRM@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Nouméa.ConsularRM@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Intel [Nouméa.Intel@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Nouméa.Intel@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Ministerial liaison [Nouméa.MinLiaison@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Nouméa.MinLiaison@mfat.govt.nz)

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**Cc:** [Noumea.ResponseManager](#); [Noumea.Controller](#); [Noumea.MinLiaison](#); [Noumea.ConsularRM](#); [Noumea.AssistedDepartures](#); [Noumea.Logistics](#); [Noumea.Planning](#); ["SCMU@dpmc.govt.nz"](#); ["fiona.dally@mbie.govt.nz"](#); ["chris.shaw@mbie.govt.nz"](#); ["mike.hill@caa.govt.nz"](#); ["Ben.king@dpmc.govt.nz"](#); [...YEOMANS, Sally \(Inet\)](#); [...YEOMANS, Sally \(Inet\)](#); ["Vanessa.berry@customs.govt.nz"](#); ["sean.bolton@dpmc.govt.nz"](#); ["Cherie.blithe@dpmc.govt.nz"](#); ["c.vandermeulen@transport.govt.nz"](#); [KANE, Jared \(PEP\)](#); [KANE, Jared \(PEP\)](#); ["Chris.Scahill@TeWhatuOra.govt.nz"](#); ["Michael.inglis@mpi.govt.nz"](#); ["sarah.tuihalangie@mpi.govt.nz"](#); ["zubair.ali@mpi.govt.nz"](#); ["Miguel.Navarro@mpi.govt.nz"](#); ["Julian.Grey@dpmc.govt.nz"](#); ["noc@mpi.govt.nz"](#); ["SUE.EDEN@nzdf.mil.nz"](#); ["David.Williams@nzdf.mil.nz"](#); ["Media@nzdf.mil.nz"](#); [...ROWE, Jessica \(Inet\)](#); [...ROWE, Jessica \(Inet\)](#); [PDG EMDR](#); ["Sally.Castro@mbie.govt.nz"](#)  
**Subject:** FORMAL MESSAGE: SITREP 26: NEW CALEDONIA UNREST - 27 MAY  
**Date:** Monday, 27 May 2024 11:02:00 am

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## Executive Summary SitRep 26: New Caledonia Unrest — Monday 27 May

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### Key media messages

- New Zealand is deeply concerned about the political unrest in New Caledonia, and we call for calm and dialogue to prevail.
- The safety of New Zealanders in New Caledonia is an urgent priority for us.
- An NZDF flight departed for New Caledonia at around 9.15am this morning and is scheduled to arrive back in New Zealand around 6pm this evening, carrying approximately 40 passengers. A further and final flight is planned for tomorrow (Tuesday).
- After tomorrow's NZDF flight, we expect there may be a small number of New Zealanders still in New Caledonia. We will continue to work with them to understand their needs.
- Seats on assisted departure flights have been prioritised based on two considerations — urgent needs and the ability for passengers to safely travel to central pick-up points in Nouméa.
- Almost all New Zealanders wanting to depart have now relocated to Noumea.
- *[If asked for details on upcoming NZDF flights]:* We are working hard to finalise logistics for NZDF flights in coming days.
- *[If asked about individual cases in the media]:* We are unable to comment on individual cases. We are continuing to be in touch directly with New Zealanders in New Caledonia who have indicated they wish to depart.

s9(2)(g)(i)

### Assisted Departures and Consular Response

- A C-130 returned to Auckland from New Caledonia on Sunday evening (26 May), with 60 passengers on board s9(2)(g)(i)
- We plan two remaining flights:
  - Monday 27 May (currently en route) — one C-130 flight to bring up to 60 passengers, including approximately 40 New Zealanders and a number of other foreign nationals to Auckland.
  - Tuesday 28 May — same operation as Monday 27 May. This flight will also bring back NZDF/MFAT personnel deployed to support assisted departures.

- If needed, we may be able to secure seats for any remaining New Zealanders on the French flight to Brisbane on Wednesday 29 May.
- As of Sunday 26 May, our five completed assisted departure flights have supported 215 New Zealanders and <sup>s6(a)</sup> foreign nationals to return to New Zealand. We are now working with those remaining New Zealanders on the ground to determine how many wish to depart.
- s6(a)
- s6(a)
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia continue to be updated and contacted through various means including regular SafeTravel messages, welfare checks by the New Zealand Consulate in Nouméa, and calls/messages from MFAT's Emergency Coordination Centre.
- New Zealand's current travel advisory for all of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential travel** (Level 3 of 4). This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.

#### *In Nouméa*

- The death toll from the unrest is seven.
- We have been informed that La Tontouta Airport, New Caledonia's international airport, will likely not reopen for commercial flights until **Sunday 2 June** at the earliest.
- s6(a), s6(b)(i)

## ANNEX: New Caledonia Unrest — Monday 27 May

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### **Key media messages**

- New Zealand is deeply concerned about the political unrest in New Caledonia, and we call for calm and dialogue to prevail.
- The safety of New Zealanders in New Caledonia is an urgent priority for us.
- An NZDF flight departed for New Caledonia this morning at 9.13am and is scheduled to arrive back in New Zealand around 6pm this evening, carrying approximately 40 passengers. A further and final flight is planned for tomorrow (Tuesday).
- After tomorrow's NZDF flight, we expect there may be a small number of New Zealanders still in New Caledonia. We will continue to work with them to understand their needs.

- Seats on assisted departure flights have been prioritised based on two considerations — urgent needs and the ability for passengers to safely travel to central pick-up points in Nouméa.
- *[If asked about upcoming NZDF flights]:* We are working hard to finalise logistics for further NZDF flights in coming days.
- *[If asked about individual cases in the media]:* We are unable to comment on individual cases. We are continuing to be in touch directly with New Zealanders in New Caledonia who have indicated they wish to depart.

**Media messages — assisted departures and consular response**

- New Zealanders are urged to keep their SafeTravel Registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their ‘departure date’ is updated.
- We have asked those registered on SafeTravel to let us know their interest in any potential further flight options. They will be contacted directly as flights are scheduled.
- New Zealanders in need of immediate consular assistance should contact the 24/7 Consular Emergency line on +64 99 20 20 20.
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia should stay in place and avoid all protests, monitor local media for developments, and comply with any instructions and restrictions issued by local authorities.
- Our staff in Wellington and Nouméa continue to conduct welfare checks on New Zealanders in New Caledonia.
- New Zealand’s current travel advisory for all of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential travel** (Level 3 of 4). This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.
- We recommend that all travellers remain in contact with their airline for any updates on flight bookings. Travellers should also contact their travel insurance provider if travel has been disrupted.
- *[If asked why the NZ Consulate in Nouméa is closed]:* Due to the State of Emergency in New Caledonia, the New Zealand Consulate office is closed. Callers to the Consulate are being directed to New Zealand’s 24/7 Consular Emergency line. A consular team is working on the ground to support New Zealanders to depart New Caledonia.

**If asked media messages — assisted departure flights and consular response**

- *[If asked about people with priority needs]:* Based on our current information, the majority of people with prioritised needs who can safely travel to pick-up points have now been able to depart.
- *[If asked about other foreign nationals on NZDF flights]:* A small number of seats were offered to other nationals with urgent needs.

- s6(a)

**If asked media messages — unrest in New Caledonia**

- *[If raised: independence of New Caledonia]:* The question of independence is one for the people of New Caledonia to decide with France. We acknowledge that the political and economic situation in New Caledonia is challenging and reiterate calls on all Parties to find a solution. We hope that peace and calm will prevail.

- s6(a) The immediate priority must be for all sides to take steps to de-escalate the situation, so that there can be dialogue and calm. No matter your views on the political arrangements in New Caledonia, everyone should agree that violence is harmful to every community there.
- *[If raised: PIF comments on crisis]:* We recognise and share the concern felt among Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) members at the recent violence. It is for individual countries to make their own assessments on the situation in New Caledonia. New Zealand has been very clear on the need for all sides to take steps to de-escalate, so that there can be dialogue and calm.

## Latest developments – <sup>s9(2)(g)(i)</sup>

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### *Assisted Departures and Consular Response*

- A C-130 returned to Auckland from New Caledonia on Sunday evening (26 May), with 60 passengers on board <sup>s9(2)(g)(i)</sup>
- Officials are making progress to confirm the following flights over the next two days:
  - Monday 27 May (currently en route) – one C-130 flight to bring up to 60 passengers, including approximately 40 New Zealanders and a number of other foreign nationals to Auckland.
  - Tuesday 28 May – we are planning for one C-130 flight, which could repatriate French nationals to Nouméa, and bring up to 60 New Zealanders and other foreign nationals to Auckland.
- If needed, we may be able to secure seats for New Zealanders on a French-operated flight to Brisbane on Wednesday 29 May.
- As of Sunday 26 May, our five completed assisted departure flights have supported 215 New Zealanders and <sup>s6(a)</sup> foreign nationals to return to New Zealand. We are now working with those remaining New Zealanders on the ground to determine how many wish to depart.
- s6(a)
- s6(a)
- Nationals from 14 countries have been evacuated on New Zealand flights to date (with the largest numbers being from <sup>s6(a)</sup> – countries New Zealand has consular obligations/<sup>s6(a)</sup> with – and from SPC (the Pacific Community)). We still have requests for assistance from a number of countries and will endeavour to accommodate as many of these as possible on the two remaining flights.
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia continue to be updated and contacted through various means including regular SafeTravel messages, welfare checks by the New Zealand Consulate in Nouméa, and calls/messages from MFAT’s Emergency Coordination Centre.
- All travellers are being advised that they are responsible for accommodation and onward travel arrangements when they arrive in Auckland. For urgent cases MFAT is working with MBIE’s Temporary Accommodation Service (on a cost-recovery basis).
- s6(a)

### *In Nouméa*

- The death toll from the unrest now sits at seven people, after a man was shot by a police officer on Friday 24 May.
- We have been informed that La Tontouta Airport, New Caledonia's international airport, will likely not reopen for commercial flights until **Sunday 2 June** at the earliest.

s6(a), s6(b)(i)

- 

- The 6pm to 6am curfew will remain in force for the full duration of the state of emergency. This curfew covers the entire territory of New Caledonia.
- In the immediate term, the French response remains focused on removing pockets of lawlessness, restoring freedom of movement by removing barricades and hazards; restocking supermarkets, petrol stations and pharmacies, ensuring the efficient movement of supplies; and supporting the function of health services.
- French officials have confirmed that there are sufficient provisions of food and medicine. Supermarkets are being restocked with some food items.

### *In New Zealand*

- Officials are preparing advice for the Minister of Foreign Affairs early next week on longer term options for political dialogue.

### *Staff welfare*

- MFAT staff in Nouméa are all reported safe and well.

### *Contacts*

- The MFAT Emergency Coordination Centre will operate from 8am-8pm daily and through the weekend. Please direct emails to:
  - Incident controller [Nouméa.Controller@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Nouméa.Controller@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Response manager [Nouméa.ResponseManager@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Nouméa.ResponseManager@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Consular response manager [Nouméa.ConsularRM@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Nouméa.ConsularRM@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Intel [Nouméa.Intel@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Nouméa.Intel@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Ministerial liaison [Nouméa.MinLiaison@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Nouméa.MinLiaison@mfat.govt.nz)



**From:** [Noumea.Intel](#)  
**To:** [NOUMEA; PACPF; DCE; ...PACIFIC POSTS; DS AAG; DS EMA; DS MLG; AUS; EUR; ISED; SORD Security; CON; PARIS; FM.P/S MFA \(Seemail\); FM.P/S Associate MFA \(Seemail\); FM.Defence \(Seemail\); FM.DPMC \(FPA\) \(Seemail\); FM.Police \(Seemail\); s6\(a\) FM.Police \(Seemail\); FM.Customs Service \(Seemail\); PACMM; PACREG; PHM; DEVPP; DEVECO; ...EUROPEAN POS IS; SAPD; "PRD@mfat.govt.nz"; AMD](#)  
**Cc:** [Noumea.ResponseManager; Noumea.Controller; Noumea.MinLiaison; Noumea.ConsularRM; Noumea.AssistedDepartures; Noumea.Logistics; Noumea.Planning; "SCMU@dpmc.govt.nz"; "fiona.dally@mbie.govt.nz"; "chris.shaw@mbie.govt.nz"; "mike.hill@caa.govt.nz"; "Ben.king@dpmc.govt.nz"; ...YEOMANS\\_Sally \(Inet\); ...YEOMANS\\_Sally \(Inet\); "Vanessa.berry@customs.govt.nz"; "sean.bolton@dpmc.govt.nz"; "Cherie.bliithe@dpmc.govt.nz"; "c.vandermeulen@transport.govt.nz"; KANE, Jared \(PEP\); KANE, Jared \(PEP\); "Chris.Scahill@TeWhatuOra.govt.nz"; "Michael.inglis@mpi.govt.nz"; "sarah.tuihalangie@mpi.govt.nz"; "zubair.ali@mpi.govt.nz"; "Miguel.Navarro@mpi.govt.nz"; "Julian.Grey@dpmc.govt.nz"; "noc@mpi.govt.nz"; "SUE.EDEN@nzdf.mil.nz"; "David.Williams@nzdf.mil.nz"; "Media@nzdf.mil.nz"; ...ROWE\\_Jessica \(Inet\); ...ROWE\\_Jessica \(Inet\); PDG EMDR; "Sally.Castro@mbie.govt.nz"](#)  
**Subject:** FORMAL MESSAGE: SITREP 27: NEW CALEDONIA UNREST - 27 MAY  
**Date:** Monday, 27 May 2024 6:59:00 pm  
**Attachments:** [Noumea Assisted Departures data 27 May 2024.pdf](#)

## Executive Summary SitRep 27: New Caledonia Unrest — Monday 27 May

Please note that we anticipate sending one final SitRep tomorrow afternoon, Tuesday 28 May.

### Key media messages

- New Zealand is deeply concerned about the political unrest in New Caledonia, and we call for calm and dialogue to prevail.
- An NZDF flight arrived in Auckland shortly before five-thirty this evening, carrying 52 passengers from New Caledonia. A further and final flight is planned for tomorrow (Tuesday).
- Following Tuesday's NZDF flight, we expect there could be a small number of New Zealanders still in New Caledonia who wish to depart. We will continue to work with them to understand their needs.
- The safety of New Zealanders in New Caledonia is an urgent priority for us.
- *[If asked why some New Zealanders remain in New Caledonia]:* As New Caledonia remains under a State of Emergency, including a national curfew, travel is restricted. This will have an impact on peoples' ability to get to central pick-up points, particularly if they are outside of Noumea.
- *[If asked about individual cases in the media]:* We are unable to comment on individual cases. We are continuing to be in touch directly with New Zealanders in New Caledonia who have indicated they wish to depart.

s9(2)(g)(i)

### Assisted Departures and Consular Response

- A C-130 returned to Auckland from New Caledonia this evening (27 May), landing at 1726h with 52 passengers on board s9(2)(g)(i)
- We have one remaining flight planned, departing tomorrow Tuesday 28 May, mirroring today's operation. This flight will also bring back NZDF/MFAT personnel deployed to support assisted departures.
- If needed, we may be able to secure seats for any remaining New Zealanders on the French flight to Brisbane on Wednesday 29 May.
- Summary of the six assisted departures from Nouméa to Auckland so far:

TOTAL PAX*	NZers**	Foreign Nationals
316	219	s6(a)

\*PAX numbers excludes MFAT & other agency staff/family

\*\*NZ citizens, Permanent Residents, and dual nationals

- As of **Monday 27 May**, our **six** completed assisted departure flights have supported **219** New Zealanders and <sup>s6(a)</sup> foreign nationals to return to New Zealand. We are now working with those remaining New Zealanders on the ground to determine how many wish to depart.
- s6(a) Two  
NZDF flights have also repatriated <sup>s6(a)</sup> French to New Caledonia, with an additional group of up to 50 expected to leave on the flight tomorrow.
- s6(a)
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia continue to be updated and contacted through various means including regular SafeTravel messages, welfare checks by the New Zealand Consulate in Nouméa, and calls/messages from MFAT's Emergency Coordination Centre.
- New Zealand's current travel advisory for all of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential travel** (Level 3 of 4). This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.

*In Nouméa*

- The death toll from the unrest is seven.
- **Unverified accounts suggest that firearms are still present in the community, reportedly sourced from burglaries to gun shops and homes.**
- We have been informed that La Tontouta Airport, New Caledonia's international airport, will likely not reopen for commercial flights until Sunday 2 June at the earliest.
- s6(a), s6(b)(i)

## ANNEX: New Caledonia Unrest — Monday 27 May

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### **Key media messages**

- New Zealand is deeply concerned about the political unrest in New Caledonia, and we call for calm and dialogue to prevail.
- An NZDF flight arrived in Auckland shortly before five-thirty this evening, carrying 52 passengers from New Caledonia. A further and final flight is planned for tomorrow (Tuesday).
- Following Tuesday's NZDF flight, we expect there could be a small number of New Zealanders still in New Caledonia who wish to depart. We will continue to work with them to understand their needs.
- The safety of New Zealanders in New Caledonia is an urgent priority for us.
- *[If asked why some New Zealanders remain in New Caledonia]: As New Caledonia remains under a*

State of Emergency, including a national curfew, travel is restricted. This will have an impact on peoples' ability to get to central pick-up points, particularly if they are outside of Noumea.

- *[If asked about individual cases in the media]:* We are unable to comment on individual cases. We are continuing to be in touch directly with New Zealanders in New Caledonia who have indicated they wish to depart.

#### **Media messages — assisted departures and consular response**

- New Zealanders are urged to keep their SafeTravel Registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their 'departure date' is updated.
- New Zealanders in need of immediate consular assistance should contact the 24/7 Consular Emergency line on +64 99 20 20 20.
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia should stay in place and avoid all protests, monitor local media for developments, and comply with any instructions and restrictions issued by local authorities.
- Our staff in Wellington and Nouméa continue to conduct welfare checks on New Zealanders in New Caledonia.
- New Zealand's current travel advisory for all of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential travel** (Level 3 of 4). This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.
- We recommend that all travellers remain in contact with their airline for any updates on flight bookings. Travellers should also contact their travel insurance provider if travel has been disrupted.
- *[If asked why the NZ Consulate in Nouméa is closed]:* Due to the State of Emergency in New Caledonia, the New Zealand Consulate office is closed. Callers to the Consulate are being directed to New Zealand's 24/7 Consular Emergency line. An **expanded** consular team **has been** working on the ground to support New Zealanders to depart New Caledonia.

#### **If asked media messages — assisted departure flights and consular response**

- *[If asked about people with priority needs]:* Based on our current information, the majority of people with prioritised needs who can safely travel to pick-up points have now been able to depart.
- *[If asked about other foreign nationals on NZDF flights]:* A small number of seats were offered to other nationals **including from our consular partners, who regularly assist New Zealanders in places where we are not represented.**
- s6(a)

#### **If asked media messages — unrest in New Caledonia**

- *[If raised: independence of New Caledonia]:* The question of independence is one for the people of New Caledonia to decide with France. We acknowledge that the political and economic situation in New Caledonia is challenging and reiterate calls on all Parties to find a solution. We hope that peace and calm will prevail.
- s6(a) The immediate priority must be for  
all sides to take steps to de-escalate the situation, so that there can be dialogue and calm. No matter your views on the political arrangements in New Caledonia, everyone should agree that violence is harmful to every community there.
- *[If raised: PIF comments on crisis]:* We recognise and share the concern felt among Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) members at the recent violence. It is for individual countries to make their own assessments on the situation in New Caledonia. New Zealand has been very clear on the need for all sides to take steps to de-escalate, so that there can be dialogue and calm.

*Assisted Departures and Consular Response*

- A C-130 returned to Auckland from New Caledonia this evening (27 May), with 52 passengers on board <sup>s9(2)(g)(i)</sup>
- We have one remaining flight planned, departing Tuesday 28 May, mirroring today's operation. This flight will also bring back NZDF/MFAT personnel deployed to support assisted departures.
- If needed, we may be able to secure seats for New Zealanders on a French-operated flight to Brisbane on Wednesday 29 May.

	Date	Operator - Route	French nationals repatriated to New Caledonia on outbound journey <sup>s6(a)</sup>	Total people transported to New Zealand*	New Zealanders**	Foreign Nationals
Flight 1	Tuesday 21 <sup>st</sup>	NZDF C-130 Nouméa - Auckland				
Flight 2	Wednesday 22 <sup>nd</sup>	French flight Nouméa - Brisbane; NZDF B757 Brisbane - Auckland				
Flight 3	Friday 24 <sup>th</sup>	NZDF C-130 Nouméa - Auckland				
Flight 4	Saturday 25 <sup>th</sup>	NZDF C-130 Nouméa - Auckland				
Flight 5	Sunday 26 <sup>th</sup>	NZDF C-130 Nouméa - Auckland				
Flight 6	Monday 27 <sup>th</sup>	NZDF C-130 Nouméa - Auckland				
		<b>TOTALS</b>				

\*PAX numbers excludes MFAT & other agency staff/family

\*\*NZ citizens, Permanent Residents, and dual nationals

- As of Monday 27 May, our six completed assisted departure flights have supported 219 New Zealanders and <sup>s6(a)</sup> foreign nationals to return to New Zealand. We are now working with those remaining New Zealanders on the ground to determine how many wish to depart.
- <sup>s6(a)</sup>
- <sup>s6(a)</sup>
- Nationals from 21 countries have been evacuated on New Zealand flights to date (with the largest numbers being from <sup>s6(a)</sup> – and from SPC (the Pacific Community)). We still have requests for assistance from a number of countries and will endeavour to accommodate as many of these as possible.
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia continue to be updated and contacted through various means including regular SafeTravel messages, welfare checks by the New Zealand Consulate in Nouméa, and calls/messages from MFAT's Emergency Coordination Centre.
- All travellers are being advised that they are responsible for accommodation and onward travel arrangements when they arrive in Auckland. For urgent cases MFAT is working with MBIE's

Temporary Accommodation Service (on a cost-recovery basis).

- s6(a)

#### *In Nouméa*

- The death toll from the unrest now sits at seven people, after a man was shot by a police officer on Friday 24 May.
- **Unverified accounts suggest that firearms are still present in the community, reportedly sourced from burglaries to gun shops and homes.**
- We have been informed that La Tontouta Airport, New Caledonia's international airport, will likely not reopen for commercial flights until Sunday 2 June at the earliest.
- s6(a), s6(b)(i)

- The 6pm to 6am curfew will remain in force for the full duration of the state of emergency. This curfew covers the entire territory of New Caledonia.
- In the immediate term, the French response remains focused on removing pockets of lawlessness, restoring freedom of movement by removing barricades and hazards; restocking supermarkets, petrol stations and pharmacies, ensuring the efficient movement of supplies; and supporting the function of health services.
- French officials have confirmed that there are sufficient provisions of food and medicine. Supermarkets are being restocked with some food items.

#### *In New Zealand*

- Officials are preparing advice for the Minister of Foreign Affairs early next week on longer term options for political dialogue.

#### *Staff welfare*

- MFAT staff in Nouméa are all reported safe and well. **One Wellington based staff member is expected to travel to Nouméa on Tuesday's NZDF flight. They will relieve one of the MFAT team at the NZ Consulate-General who will travel on the final NZDF flight to New Zealand for relief leave.**

#### *Contacts*

- The MFAT Emergency Coordination Centre will operate from 8am-8pm daily and through the weekend. Please direct emails to:
  - Incident controller [Nouméa.Controller@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Nouméa.Controller@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Response manager [Nouméa.ResponseManager@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Nouméa.ResponseManager@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Consular response manager [Nouméa.ConsularRM@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Nouméa.ConsularRM@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Intel [Nouméa.Intel@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Nouméa.Intel@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Ministerial liaison [Nouméa.MinLiaison@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Nouméa.MinLiaison@mfat.govt.nz)

Noumea Intelligence Function

Noumea ECC

[Noumea.Intel@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.Intel@mfat.govt.nz)

Released under the Official Information Act

**From:** [Noumea.Intel](#)  
**To:** [NOUMEA; PACPF; DCE; ...PACIFIC POSTS; DS AAG; DS EMA; DS MLG; AUS; EUR; ISED; SORD Security; CON; PARIS; FM.P/S MFA \(Seemail\); FM.P/S Associate MFA \(Seemail\); FM.Defence \(Seemail\); FM.DPMC \(FPA\) \(Seemail\); FM.Police \(Seemail\); s6\(a\) FM.Police \(Seemail\); FM.Customs Service \(Seemail\); PACMM; PACREG; PHM; DEVPP; DEVECO; ...EUROPEAN POS IS; SAPD; "PRD@mfat.govt.nz"; AMD](#)  
**Cc:** [Noumea.ResponseManager; Noumea.Controller; Noumea.MinLiaison; Noumea.ConsularRM; Noumea.AssistedDepartures; Noumea.Logistics; Noumea.Planning; "SCMU@dpmc.govt.nz"; "fiona.dally@mbie.govt.nz"; "chris.shaw@mbie.govt.nz"; "mike.hill@caa.govt.nz"; "Ben.king@dpmc.govt.nz"; ...YEOMANS, Sally \(Inet\); ...YEOMANS, Sally \(Inet\); "Vanessa.berry@customs.govt.nz"; "sean.bolton@dpmc.govt.nz"; "Cherie.bliithe@dpmc.govt.nz"; "c.vandermeulen@transport.govt.nz"; KANE, Jared \(PEP\); KANE, Jared \(PEP\); "Chris.Scahill@TeWhatuOra.govt.nz"; "Michael.inglis@mpi.govt.nz"; "sarah.tuihalangie@mpi.govt.nz"; "zubair.ali@mpi.govt.nz"; "Miguel.Navarro@mpi.govt.nz"; "Julian.Grey@dpmc.govt.nz"; "noc@mpi.govt.nz"; "SUE.EDEN@nzdf.mil.nz"; "David.Williams@nzdf.mil.nz"; "Media@nzdf.mil.nz"; ...ROWE, Jessica \(Inet\); ...ROWE, Jessica \(Inet\); PDG EMDR; "Sally.Castro@mbie.govt.nz"](#)  
**Subject:** FORMAL MESSAGE: SITREP 28: NEW CALEDONIA UNREST - 28 MAY  
**Date:** Tuesday, 28 May 2024 4:55:00 pm  
**Attachments:** [Noumea Assisted Departures data 28 May 2024.pdf](#)

## Executive Summary SitRep 28: New Caledonia Unrest —Tuesday 28 May

Please note that this is the final SitRep from the Nouméa Emergency Coordination Centre. The Nouméa ECC will close this evening following the arrival of the final NZDF flight at 1800 into Auckland. The remaining response efforts will be led by Nouméa Consulate and PACPF.

### Key media messages

- New Zealand is deeply concerned about the political unrest in New Caledonia, and we call for calm and dialogue to prevail.
- The final NZDF assisted departure flight is on its way to Auckland today, carrying 45 passengers. It is expected to land around 6pm this evening.
- We expect there could be a small number of New Zealanders still in New Caledonia who wish to depart. We will continue to work with them to understand their needs.
- The safety of these remaining New Zealanders in New Caledonia is a priority for us.
- *[If asked why some New Zealanders remain in New Caledonia]:* The State of Emergency, and national curfew impacted some peoples' ability to get to central pick-up points, particularly if they were outside of Nouméa. Other New Zealanders have chosen to remain in New Caledonia.
- *[If asked about individual cases in the media]:* We are unable to comment on individual cases. We are in touch with a small number of remaining New Zealanders.

s9(2)(g)(i)

### Assisted Departures and Consular Response

- A C-130 is currently enroute to Auckland from New Caledonia (28 May), expected to land around 1800h with 50 passengers on board s9(2)(g)(i) This flight is also bringing back NZDF/MFAT personnel deployed to support assisted departures.
- Today's flight is the last NZDF assisted departures flight to New Zealand.
- If needed, we may be able to secure seats for any remaining New Zealanders on the French flight to Brisbane on Wednesday 29 May.
- Summary of the seven assisted departures from Nouméa to Auckland:

TOTAL PAX*	NZers**	Foreign Nationals
<b>361</b>	224	s6(a)

\*PAX numbers excludes MFAT & other agency staff/family

\*\*NZ citizens, Permanent Residents, and dual nationals

- As of **Tuesday 28 May**, our **seven** completed assisted departure flights have supported **224** New Zealanders and <sup>s6(a)</sup> foreign nationals to return to New Zealand. We are in touch with a small number of remaining New Zealanders.

- s6(a) As of  
**Tuesday 28 May**, **three** NZDF flights have also repatriated <sup>s6(a)</sup> French to New Caledonia.
- s6(a)

- New Zealanders in New Caledonia will be updated through SafeTravel messages.
- New Zealand's current travel advisory for all of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential travel** (Level 3 of 4). This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.
- **On Sunday 26 May at an event in the Netherlands, the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Hanke Bruins sought out New Zealand's Head of Mission specifically in order to convey her deep gratitude for New Zealand's help evacuating Dutch citizens from New Caledonia.** <sup>s6(a)</sup>

The Minister asked that we pass on The Dutch Government's sincere thanks to Minister Peters and to MFAT teams in Wellington and Nouméa.

*In Nouméa*

- In a statement yesterday Monday 27 May, President Macron announced that the state of emergency lifted in Nouméa at 6am NZT this morning, Tuesday 28 May. The 6pm to 6am curfew remains in place.
- France is sending seven more mobile force units to New Caledonia as reinforcements, bringing the number of French security forces to around 3500.
- The death toll from the unrest is seven.
- Unverified accounts suggest that firearms are still present in the community, reportedly sourced from burglaries to gun shops and homes.
- We have been informed that La Tontouta Airport, New Caledonia's international airport, will likely not reopen for commercial flights until Sunday 2 June at the earliest.

*In New Zealand*

- The Minister of Foreign Affairs (MFA) visited the Emergency Coordination Centre at MFAT Wellington today (Tuesday 28) to express his thanks to all MFAT and NZDF staff who had worked on the response. MFA and Minister of Defence released a [final joint press release](#) this afternoon.
- At a post-Cabinet press conference on Monday 27 May, the Prime Minister gave a short update on the number of assisted departures coordinated by New Zealand, and expressed his thanks to MFAT and NZDF staff who worked on the response.

## ANNEX: New Caledonia Unrest — Tuesday 28 May

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### **Key media messages**

- New Zealand is deeply concerned about the political unrest in New Caledonia, and we call for calm and dialogue to prevail.
- **The final NZDF assisted departure flight is on its way to Auckland today, carrying 45 passengers. It**



is expected to land around 6pm this evening.

- We expect there could be a small number of New Zealanders still in New Caledonia who wish to depart. We will continue to work with them to understand their needs.
- The safety of these remaining New Zealanders in New Caledonia is a priority for us.
- *[If asked why some New Zealanders remain in New Caledonia]:* The State of Emergency, and national curfew impacted some peoples' ability to get to central pick-up points, particularly if they were outside of Nouméa. Other New Zealanders have chosen to remain in New Caledonia.
- *[If asked about individual cases in the media]:* We are unable to comment on individual cases. We are in touch with a small number of remaining New Zealanders.

#### **Media messages — assisted departures and consular response**

- New Zealanders are urged to keep their SafeTravel Registration up to date, in particular, ensuring that their 'departure date' is updated.
- New Zealanders in need of immediate consular assistance should contact the 24/7 Consular Emergency line on +64 99 20 20 20.
- New Zealanders in New Caledonia should stay in place and avoid all protests, monitor local media for developments, and comply with any instructions and restrictions issued by local authorities.
- Our staff in Wellington and Nouméa continue to conduct welfare checks on New Zealanders in New Caledonia.
- New Zealand's current travel advisory for all of New Caledonia is **Avoid non-essential travel** (Level 3 of 4). This will have implications for travel insurance and our consular response.
- We recommend that all travellers remain in contact with their airline for any updates on flight bookings. Travellers should also contact their travel insurance provider if travel has been disrupted.
- *[If asked why the NZ Consulate in Nouméa is closed]:* Due to the State of Emergency in New Caledonia, the New Zealand Consulate office is closed. Callers to the Consulate are being directed to New Zealand's 24/7 Consular Emergency line. An expanded consular team has been working on the ground to support New Zealanders to depart New Caledonia. **These staff are enroute back to Auckland on the last NZDF assisted departures flight.**

#### **If asked media messages — assisted departure flights and consular response**

- *[If asked about people with priority needs]:* Based on our current information, all of people with prioritised needs who could safely travel to pick-up points have been able to depart.
- *[If asked about other foreign nationals on NZDF flights]:* A number of seats were offered to other nationals including from our consular partners, who regularly assist New Zealanders in places where we are not represented.
- *[If asked about foreign nationals on outbound NZDF flights]:* NZDF flights from Auckland to Nouméa have transported **more than 100** passengers to New Caledonia. These were people who have been unable to return to New Caledonia due to the lack of commercial flights.

#### **If asked media messages — unrest in New Caledonia**

- *[If raised: independence of New Caledonia]:* The question of independence is one for the people of New Caledonia to decide with France. We acknowledge that the political and economic situation in New Caledonia is challenging and reiterate calls on all Parties to find a solution. We hope that peace and calm will prevail.
- s6(a) The immediate priority must be for  
all sides to take steps to de-escalate the situation, so that there can be dialogue and calm. No matter your views on the political arrangements in New Caledonia, everyone should agree that violence is harmful to every community there.
- *[If raised: PIF comments on crisis]:* We recognise and share the concern felt among Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) members at the recent violence. It is for individual countries to make their own

assessments on the situation in New Caledonia. New Zealand has been very clear on the need for all sides to take steps to de-escalate, so that there can be dialogue and calm.

Latest developments – <sup>s9(2)(g)(i)</sup>

*Assisted Departures and Consular Response*

- A C-130 is currently enroute to Auckland from New Caledonia evening (28 May), expected to land around 1800h with 50 passengers on board <sup>s9(2)(g)(i)</sup> This flight is also bringing back NZDF/MFAT personnel deployed to support assisted departures.
- Today's flight is the last NZDF assisted departures flight to New Zealand.
- If needed, we may be able to secure seats for New Zealanders on a French-operated flight to Brisbane on Wednesday 29 May.

	Date	Operator - Route	French nationals repatriated to New Caledonia on outbound journey <sup>s6(a)</sup>	Total people transported to New Zealand*	New Zealanders**	Foreign Nationals
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Flight 2	Wednesday 22 <sup>nd</sup>	French flight Nouméa - Brisbane; NZDF B757 Brisbane - Auckland				
Flight 3	Friday 24 <sup>th</sup>	NZDF C-130 Nouméa - Auckland				
Flight 4	Saturday 25 <sup>th</sup>	NZDF C-130 Nouméa - Auckland				
Flight 5	Sunday 26 <sup>th</sup>	NZDF C-130 Nouméa - Auckland				
Flight 6	Monday 27 <sup>th</sup>	NZDF C-130 Nouméa - Auckland				
Flight 7	Tuesday 28 <sup>th</sup>	NZDF C-130 Nouméa - Auckland				
		<b>TOTALS</b>				

\*PAX numbers excludes MFAT & other agency staff/family

\*\*NZ citizens, Permanent Residents, and dual nationals

- As of Monday 27 May, our **seven** assisted departure flights have supported **224** New Zealanders and <sup>s6(a)</sup> foreign nationals to return to New Zealand. We are now working with those remaining New Zealanders on the ground to determine how many wish to depart.

- <sup>s6(a)</sup> **Tuesday 28 May three** NZDF flights have also repatriated <sup>s6(a)</sup> French to New Caledonia As of
- <sup>s6(a)</sup>

- Nationals from 21 countries have been evacuated on New Zealand flights to date (with the largest

numbers being from s6(a) – and from SPC (the Pacific Community)).

- New Zealanders in New Caledonia continue to be updated through SafeTravel messages.
- All travellers are being advised that they are responsible for accommodation and onward travel arrangements when they arrive in Auckland. For urgent cases MFAT is working with MBIE's Temporary Accommodation Service (on a cost-recovery basis).
- On Sunday 26 May at an event in the Netherlands, the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Hanke Bruins sought out New Zealand's Head of Mission specifically in order to convey her deep gratitude for New Zealand's help evacuating Dutch citizens from New Caledonia. s6(a)

The Minister asked that we pass on The Dutch Government's sincere thanks to Minister Peters and to MFAT teams in Wellington and Nouméa.

#### *In Nouméa*

- In a statement yesterday Monday 27 May, President Macron announced that the state of emergency lifted in Nouméa at 6am NZT this morning, Tuesday 28 May. The 6pm to 6am curfew remains in place.
- France is sending seven more mobile force units to New Caledonia as reinforcements, bringing the number of French security forces to around 3500.
- The death toll from the unrest now sits at seven people, after a man was shot by a police officer on Friday 24 May.
- Unverified accounts suggest that firearms are still present in the community, reportedly sourced from burglaries to gun shops and homes.
- We have been informed that La Tontouta Airport, New Caledonia's international airport, will likely not reopen for commercial flights until Sunday 2 June at the earliest.
- s6(a), s6(b)(i)

- In the immediate term, the French response remains focused on removing pockets of lawlessness, restoring freedom of movement by removing barricades and hazards; restocking supermarkets, petrol stations and pharmacies, ensuring the efficient movement of supplies; and supporting the function of health services.
- French officials have confirmed that there are sufficient provisions of food and medicine. Supermarkets are being restocked with some food items.

#### *In New Zealand*

- The Minister of Foreign Affairs (MFA) visited the Emergency Coordination Centre at MFAT Wellington today to express his thanks to all MFAT and NZDF staff who had worked on the response. MFA and Minister of Defence released a [final joint press release](#) this afternoon.
- At a post-cabinet press conference on Monday 27 May, the Prime Minister gave a short update on the number of assisted departures coordinated by New Zealand, and expressed his thanks to MFAT and NZDF staff who worked on the response.
- Officials are preparing advice for the Minister of Foreign Affairs on longer term options for political dialogue.

#### *Staff welfare*

- MFAT staff in Nouméa are all reported safe and well. One Wellington based staff member **travelled to** Nouméa on Tuesday's NZDF flight. They **relieved** one of the MFAT team at the NZ Consulate-General **who is travelling** on the final NZDF flight to New Zealand for relief leave.

#### Contacts

- The Nouméa ECC will close this afternoon. Please contact the following divisions about New Zealand's ongoing response:
  - Consular-related issues: [consular.pacific@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:consular.pacific@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Media-related issues: [media@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:media@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Nouméa Consulate: [NOU@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:NOU@mfat.govt.nz)
  - Pacific Polynesia and French Pacific Division: [PACPF@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:PACPF@mfat.govt.nz)

Noumea Intelligence Function

Noumea ECC

[Noumea.Intel@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Noumea.Intel@mfat.govt.nz)

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