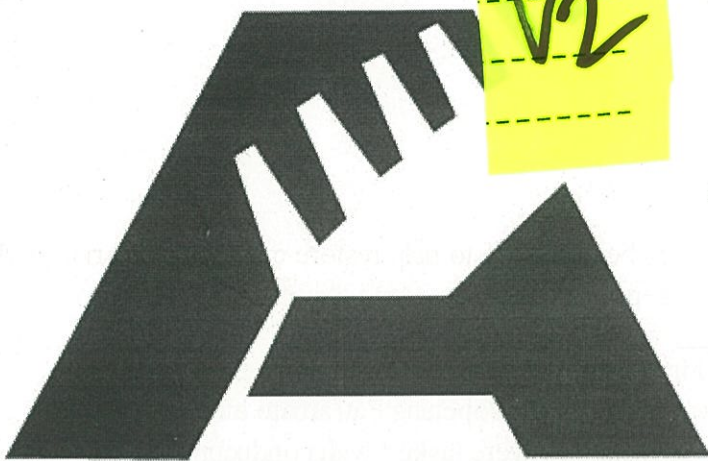


peacekeeping

(NZ Army, 2009c)



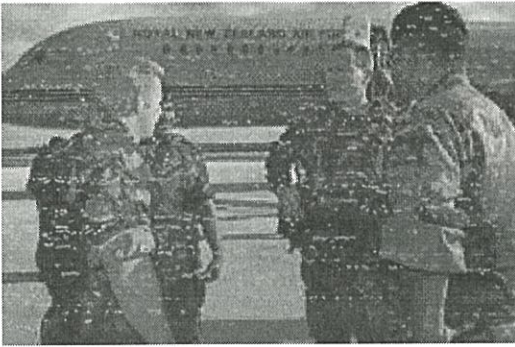
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Tonga



New Zealand-led Combined Task Force

A contingent of 72 troops deployed to Tonga on November 16 2006 to help restore calm following riots and disorder. The contingent returned to New Zealand December 2 2006.

For two weeks New Zealand led a combined task force with Australian troops to assist the Tongan Defence Services and government. The taskforce was tasked with reopening Fau'amato airport to allow flights into and out of Tonga. Later in their short deployment they were tasked with conducting limited security patrols in Nuku'alofa.

The 150-strong combined task force commanded by NZDF Lieutenant Colonel Darren Beck included more than 80 Australian defence personnel and police. New Zealand's contribution was an infantry platoon, air security and loading teams and a collection of support personnel.

- [Tonga image gallery](#)
- [Articles about the NZDF in Tonga](#)

Timeline:

December 2 - The contingent of troops which deployed to restore stability in Tonga after the November 16 riots returned to New Zealand. They have worked alongside the Tongan Defence Services and the Australian Defence Force to reopen the airport and restore calm to the country.

November 30 - Defence Minister Phil Goff announces that NZDF personnel will return home from Tonga this weekend. "Our Defence Force personnel have operated in a low key and effective manner," he said. "They have worked well with the Tongan Defence Service and their Australian counterparts and their job is now completed." Mr Goff said the NZDF had played a key role in re-opening the airport and had provided strong support to the Tongan defence and police to ensure stability and security was restored to Nuku'alofa.

November 21 - The combined task force continues to support Tongan Defence Services in restoring calm in Tonga. Combined Task Force Commander Lieutenant Colonel Darren Beck said New Zealand and Australia were liaising with Tongan Defence Services to determine how they could best support the country in the coming days.

November 20 - The first civilian flights carrying passengers into and out of Tonga resume. The combined task force continues to liaise with the Tongan Defence Services.

November 19 - The New Zealand-led combined task force declares Fau'amotu Airport open for civilian air travel. Commander Joint Forces New Zealand Rear Admiral Jack Steer said the operation had gone smoothly.

November 18 - A 72-strong contingent of NZDF personnel arrive in Tonga at the request of the Tongan government at approximately 3pm. Their first task was to work alongside Australian and Tongan services to set-up a base of operations and re-open the airport for civilian flights. The NZDF contingent is supported by NZ Police and personnel from a variety of other Government agencies. More than 80 Australian military personnel are involved in the NZ-led combined task force.

November 17 - 18 - Disorder continues in Tonga. Access to Fau'amotu Airport is limited and many people remain indoors in Nuku'alofa.

November 16 - Pro-democracy protestors stage a demonstration in Nuku'alofa which quickly turns violent. Tongan police and defence force personnel are powerless as much of the capital is gutted by rioting and fire. Newspaper reports indicate up to eight people were killed.

This page was last reviewed on 25 March 2009 and is current.

