



Headquarters
New Zealand Defence Force
Defence House
Private Bag 39997
Wellington Mail Centre
Lower Hutt 5045
New Zealand

OIA-2026-5884

5th

August 2026



Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your request to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade for information related to New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) activity in the Yellow and East China seas. Your request was transferred to the NZDF on 6 July 2026 for consideration under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

Specifically, your request is for *formal advice (briefings, diplomatic cables, etc.) regarding China's public concerns raised in April 2026 about NZDF activity in the Yellow and East China seas, and formal advice concerning NZDF operations in that region from 1 January 2026 – 17 June 2026.*

In this instance, *formal advice* has been interpreted as advice to executive leadership and ministers, including the Prime Minister. Below is an excerpt from the Defence Weekly Report (19-25 March) to the Minister of Defence:

Operation Whio commences, 28 March – 12 April

From 28 March – 12 April, the NZDF will be conducting Operation Whio patrols supporting UN sanction enforcement against North Korea. Operations will be predominantly conducted in the shipping lanes of the Yellow Sea with coordinated surveillance with a Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF) P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft supporting the Enforcement Coordination Centre. The P-8A will follow clearly defined mission parameters, searching vast areas of sea and cueing surface assets where appropriate to investigate suspicious vessels.

The Defence Weekly Reports also provide operational updates for all overseas deployments. This information is withheld in accordance with section 6(a) of the OIA as it provides details on capability and planning.

An April Dot-Point Brief to the Minister of Defence is also withheld in full in accordance with sections 6(a) and 9(2)(g)(i). Respectively, this is to avoid prejudice to the security and defence of New Zealand and the international relations of the Government of New Zealand, as well as to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expressions of opinion.

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

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

Yours sincerely

GA Motley

Brigadier

Chief of Staff HQNZDF