

HON JUDITH COLLINS, MINISTER OF DEFENCE

NZDF Liaison Officer to the Civilian Military Coordination Centre

May 2026

This pack contains a Ministerial briefing advising the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Defence on the Civil-Military Coordination Centre (CMCC) and the Stabilization force for Gaza. It sought approval for the second extension of a New Zealand Defence Force liaison officer to the CMCC.

The pack comprises the following document:

- Ministerial Briefing *Briefing: New Zealand Defence Force Liaison Officer at the Civil-Military Coordination Centre – Next Steps*, 26 January 2026

This pack has been released on the Ministry of Defence website, available at: www.defence.govt.nz/publications.

It has been necessary to withhold certain information in accordance with the following provisions of the Official Information Act 1982. Where information is withheld, the relevant sections of the Act are indicated in the body of the document. Where information has been withheld in accordance with section 9(2) of the Act, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.

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- the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the Government of New Zealand [section 6(a)]
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- enable a Minister of the Crown or any department or organisation holding the information to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations [section 9(2)(j)].



NZDF ref: 2026-1

MoD ref: 02-2026

Minister of Foreign Affairs For approval by 26 January 2026

Minister of Defence For approval by 26 January 2026

Briefing: New Zealand Defence Force Liaison Officer at the Civil-Military Coordination Centre – Next Steps

PURPOSE To seek approval for a three-month extension of the liaison officer deployment to the Civil-Military Coordination Centre in Israel, to support the development of options for New Zealand’s response to stability efforts in Gaza.

Recommended referrals

Prime Minister For information by 26 January 2026

[Redacted]

NAME	POSITION, ORGANISATION	PHONE
[Redacted]	s9(2)(a), s9(2)(g)(i)	[Redacted]
[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]
[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]

Agency consultation

The following agencies were involved: The Ministry of Defence, the New Zealand Defence Force, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Key points

- This ministerial briefing recommends that the deployment of a NZDF liaison officer to the United States (US) led Civil-Military Coordination Centre (CMCC) in Israel be extended for a further three months, beyond the initial six-weeks and subsequent eight-weeks approved by Ministers on 21 October and 25 November 2025 respectively, until 3 May 2026. Extending the deployment will enable New Zealand to continue gathering information about the situation on the ground in Gaza, the implementation of the Peace Plan, and the emerging peace and security architecture for Gaza.

- [REDACTED] s6(a)
[REDACTED] The NZDF liaison officer deployed to the CMCC has improved New Zealand's understanding of the situation on the ground, s6(a)
[REDACTED]

- [REDACTED] s6(a)
[REDACTED] While the humanitarian situation in Gaza has improved since the establishment of the Peace Plan, the situation remains volatile, and challenges remain. The continually evolving situation means that officials assess there will not be sufficient information available at the end of the current eight-week mandate to allow the development of advice on any future New Zealand contribution, for Ministers' consideration.

- New Zealand has a strong interest in resolution of the conflict in a way that promotes regional and international stability. [REDACTED] s6(a), s9(2)(f)(iv)
[REDACTED]

- [REDACTED] s6(a)
[REDACTED]

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s9(2)(g)(ii)

Released by the Minister of Defence

Recommendations

It is recommended that you:

1. **Agree** to extend the deployment of a New Zealand Defence Force liaison officer to the Civil-Military Coordination Centre in Israel, beyond 2 February 2026, for a further three-month period, until 3 May 2026. **Yes / No**
2. **Note** that, in line with previously agreed mandates for this deployment, the liaison officer may visit other parts of the Middle East region, [REDACTED] s6(a) [REDACTED] and excluding Gaza. **Noted**

RT HON WINSTON PETERS

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Date

HON JUDITH COLLINS KC

Minister of Defence

Date:

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Report

The NZDF's liaison officer deployment at the CMCC to date

1. Following the establishment of the Peace Plan, the US Central Command (CENTCOM) quickly worked to establish the CMCC [redacted] s6(a) [redacted] s6(a), s6(b)(i) [redacted]
2. On 21 October 2025, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Defence approved the deployment of a NZDF liaison officer to the US-led CMCC in Israel, for an initial period of 6 weeks. This deployment commenced on 27 October 2025 with the six-week period ending on 8 December 2025. On 25 November 2025, Ministers approved the extension of the liaison officer deployment for an additional eight-week period, until 2 February 2026. This extension was granted given [redacted] s6(a) [redacted] and that there was insufficient information to develop s6(a) options [redacted] s6(a), s9(2)(f)(iv) [redacted] for Ministers consideration.
3. The NZDF liaison officer's reporting from the CMCC, in combination with reporting from other channels, has made a critical contribution to our understanding of the situation on the ground. [redacted] s6(a) [redacted] we consider additional time is required to better understand the situation and provide options.

Updates on the situation in Gaza

4. [redacted] s6(a) [redacted] s6(a), s6(b)(i), s6(b)(ii) [redacted] (Further information on the situation, [redacted] s6(a), s6(b)(i), s6(b)(ii) [redacted])
5. [redacted] s6(a), s6(b)(i), s6(b)(ii) [redacted] s6(a), s6(b)(i), s6(b)(ii) [redacted]
6. [redacted] s6(a), s6(b)(i), s6(b)(ii) [redacted]

Residual information gaps

7. [Redacted] s6(a), s6(b)(i)

Proposal to extend the deployment of a liaison officer to the CMCC

8. Officials recommend that the current eight-week mandated deployment of a liaison officer to the CMCC, scheduled to expire on 2 February 2026, be extended a further three months until 3 May 2026. [Redacted] s6(a)

9. In line with the previously approved mandate, the liaison officer would be based in Israel at the CMCC, although may also visit other parts of the Middle East region, excluding Gaza. [Redacted] s6(a)

10. The liaison officer would continue to build our understanding of the situation to support in the development of options for future New Zealand contributions, for consideration by Ministers. This deployment may be supplemented with short-term visits by a New Zealand civilian representative (e.g. from Wellington, or our diplomatic posts in the region), [Redacted] s6(a)

Benefits of a further extension

11. Extending the liaison officer position at the CMCC for a period of three months would ensure continuity of access to one of New Zealand's principal sources of information regarding developments in Gaza, [Redacted] s6(a), s6(b)(i), s6(b)(ii)
[Redacted] s6(a), s6(b)(i), s6(b)(ii)

[Redacted] s6(a)

12. There is a strong foreign policy impetus for New Zealand to contribute to peace and humanitarian efforts in Gaza. New Zealand has a strong interest in resolution of the conflict in a way that promotes regional and international stability. [Redacted] s6(a), s9(2)(f)(iv)

s6(a), s9(2)(f)(iv)

13. Officials assess, however, that there remains insufficient information to provide robust advice to Ministers on options for future contributions, particularly given that neither the BoP nor the ISF have been stood up.

14. s6(a)

Risks of a further extension

15. s6(a)

16. s6(a)

17. s6(a)

s6(a)

s6(a)		

Financial Implications

19. The extension of the liaison officer deployment would be funded through the NZDF baselines; *Vote Defence Force: Operations Contributing to New Zealand's Security, Stability and Interests MCA.*

Legal Considerations

20. s9(2)(h)

21. s9(2)(h)

22. s9(2)(h)

23. s9(2)(h)

24. s9(2)(h)

1 s6(a)

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s9(2)(h)

Next Steps

25. Should Ministers approve the extension of the NZDF liaison officer deployment to the CMCC until 3 May 2026, officials will provide an updated press release for ministerial consideration.

26. Officials will continue to update Ministers on developments over the course of the NZDF liaison officer deployment to the CMCC. s9(2)(f)(iv)

27. Officials will provide further advice in the coming months with options for New Zealand's response to stability efforts in Gaza.

28. Should Ministers select not to extend the deployment of the NZDF liaison officer, officials will communicate the decision to appropriate representatives in the CMCC. The NZDF liaison officer currently deployed would return to New Zealand following completion of the current mandate which expires on 2 February 2026.

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ANNEX A – Further information on the situation in Gaza

Information provided is drawn from reporting from the NZDF liaison officer, in combination with [REDACTED] s6(a)

Implementation of the Peace Plan

1. [REDACTED] s6(a) On 15 January 2025, US envoy Steve Witkoff announced the Peace Plan's transition from phase 1 (which was originally intended to take 72 hours), to phase 2.

2. [REDACTED] s6(a)

Security and stability

3. The security situation in Gaza remains volatile with a continuation of high tensions and enduring insecurity within Gaza. [REDACTED] s6(a)

4. [REDACTED] s6(a), s6(b)(ii)

Humanitarian efforts, reconstruction and infrastructure

5. Humanitarian conditions within Gaza have improved markedly since the ceasefire agreement, in part thanks to the role of the CMCC in coordinating the weekly entry of 4,200 trucks of humanitarian aid provisions into Gaza.

6. There continues to be high levels of acute food insecurity and shortages of essential supplies, including medical provisions.

7. Infrastructure damage within Gaza is affecting access to basic services including education, health, electricity, and potable water.

8. [REDACTED] s6(a)

Mechanisms supporting implementation of the Peace Plan

9. On 17 November 2025, UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2803 was adopted, authorising the establishment of an ISF to secure borders, stabilise the security environment in Gaza, and train and provide support to Palestinian security forces.

10. [REDACTED] s6(a), s6(b)(i), s6(b)(ii)

11. UNSCR 2803 authorised the establishment of a BoP as a transitional administration to set the framework and coordinate funding for the redevelopment of Gaza. The Director

General of the BoP has been announced,

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

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

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

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