

Coast Guard completes two-week operation in Pacific region



U.S. Coast Guard District 14

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HONOLULU – The U.S. Coast Guard has concluded Operation Kuru Kuru, an annually held comprehensive two-week operation in the Pacific region, highlighting the Coast Guard's commitment to supporting international partners in the region.

Operation Kuru Kuru, executed from 22 Oct. to 3 Nov. 2023, is a collaborative effort with the Regional Fisheries

Surveillance Centre, aimed at countering Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing across the region.

The operation encompasses a wide array of objectives, including enhancing cooperative surveillance engagement between participating nations, conducting boarding activities at sea to combat IUU fishing, and utilizing remote sensing information to drive intelligence-led operations. This operation covers a combined area of 15 participating Pacific Island Country exclusive economic zones and the adjacent high seas pockets, approximating 8.2 million square miles, an area more than twice the size of the continental United States.

“The U.S. Coast Guard’s presence and contributions to Operation Kuru Kuru underscore our commitment to regional security and disaster response,” said Cmdr. Andrew Williams, enforcement branch chief for U.S. Coast Guard District 14. “We are honored to stand alongside our international partners as we work together to address challenges that impact the Pacific region.”

While engaged in the region, the Coast Guard offers a host of mission capabilities, including proactively supporting search and rescue operations, humanitarian aid, and air and vessel surveillance to counter illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing across the region.

During this operation, a Coast Guard C-130 based out of Coast Guard District 14’s Air Station Barbers Point, responded to a request from the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre Fiji to perform search and rescue operations in and around the Nonouti Island, Gilbert Islands, Kiribati. The C-130 was then rerouted following Tropical Cyclone Lola’s impact on Vanuatu to conduct post-storm assessments throughout the South Pacific island chain surrounding Vanuatu. These assessments were integral in gauging the extent of damage caused by the cyclone and facilitating the coordination of relief efforts.

Despite the operational challenges posed by Tropical Cyclone Lola, the C-130 was able to conduct aerial surveillance fishery patrols within the EEZs of Fiji, Tonga, American Samoa, and Vanuatu, providing several crucial observation reports to partner nations.

“Operation Kuru Kuru highlights the Coast Guard’s partnership with Pacific Island nations and how these collaborative efforts are vital in our mission to combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing.” said Rear Adm. Michael Day, commander of U.S. Coast Guard District 14. “Together, we can protect our oceans, preserve marine resources, and ensure sustainable fisheries for future generations while addressing additional challenges that impact the Pacific region.”

Through operations like Operation Kuru Kuru, the Coast Guard remains dedicated to serving and safeguarding the international community, addressing IUU fishing, and responding to humanitarian crises. It reinforces the importance of multilateral cooperation and regional security to protect the resources and well-being of Pacific nations.

The Coast Guard is responsible for ensuring the safety, security, and environmental protection of the Pacific region. Its core missions encompass search and rescue, law enforcement, fisheries protection, and humanitarian assistance across a vast and diverse area of operations.