Middle East Mission Complete for Australian P-8A Poseidon

CANBERRA – The deployment of a Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) P-8A Poseidon aircraft to the Middle East has concluded with the aircraft returning to Australia, the Australian Department of Defence said in a release.

“Over the last month, the P-8A Poseidon aircraft has provided valuable maritime surveillance and reconnaissance to support the coalition partners in the [International Maritime Security Construct],” Defence Minister Linda Reynolds said.

“It is now time for the Poseidon to return home, having played a key role in supporting freedom of navigation and the free flow of shipping, which is crucial to regional security and stability,” she said.

The deployment was the first time the RAAF P-8A had operated in the Middle East.

On return to Australia, the P-8A Poseidon and its crew will contribute to maritime intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance duties there.

A small number of Australian Defence Force personnel will continue to provide liaison, planning and coordination support to the IMSC headquarters.

A Royal Australian Navy Anzac-class frigate will deploy to the Middle East in January 2020 for about six months, in support of Australia’s contribution to the IMSC and the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF).

The CMF is the U.S.-led maritime coalition against terrorism, piracy and drug smuggling in the Middle East.