

## ADF bolsters Pacific security with Solania mission

August 24, 2025

— Categories: Defence & Security



Download IPFS

The Australian Defence Force (ADF) has reinforced its role in regional security with continued participation in surveillance operations across the Pacific. Under **Operation Solania**, the ADF supported the Solomon Islands through the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), focusing on the protection of vital marine resources from illegal exploitation.

As part of the FFA's Operation Island Chief, the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) deployed a C-27J Spartan aircraft and crew from No. 35 Squadron to carry out aerial patrols. These missions targeted illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities within the Solomon Islands' Exclusive Economic Zone. The deployment is one of four annual multilateral operations coordinated by the FFA and funded through Australia's Pacific Maritime Security Program.

Vice Admiral Justin Jones, Chief of Joint Operations, said this marked the third iteration of Operation Solania in 2025, underlining Australia's enduring partnership with Pacific nations.

"This year, ADF actions in support of the FFA and its members have been conducted across four Pacific nations, including the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Tonga, Fiji, and the Solomon Islands," Vice Admiral Jones said.

He stressed that the ADF's cooperation with the FFA strengthens the region's ability to safeguard sovereignty and economic stability. "The FFA brings together a number of like-minded nations in support of their operations, and the ADF is proud to contribute. Operation Solania contributes to a secure Pacific and supports a sustainable future in the region," he added.

The latest Solania patrols covered an extensive area, with Squadron Leader James Champness, Detachment Commander and C-27J Spartan captain, reporting that the aircraft travelled more than 22,413 kilometers while conducting surveillance flights.

During the patrols, the ADF identified 65 vessels of interest, documented suspicious activity, and delivered key intelligence to the FFA for further action. Champness emphasized that the squadron's work directly supports Pacific nations facing ongoing security threats from transnational crime and illegal resource exploitation.

"35 Squadron continues to deliver a capability that contributes strongly to Pacific security," Champness said.

Australia's ongoing participation in Solania reflects broader efforts to address non-traditional security challenges in the Pacific. IUU fishing remains a major concern for island nations, threatening both food security and economic development. Through maritime surveillance, Australia aims to help deter such activities while reinforcing the sovereignty of its regional partners.

Canberra has maintained that strong cooperation with the Pacific is essential in facing growing transnational challenges. By funding and providing resources for operations like Solania, the ADF demonstrates that its role extends beyond national defense to include long-term support for its neighbors' economic and territorial security.