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RAAF Supports Fiji's UN Peacekeeping Mission in Israel

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On 16 July 2025, the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) deployed a KC–30A Multi–Role Tanker Transport to airlift 113 Republic of Fiji Military Forces (RFMF) personnel from Nadi to Darwin, and onward to the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) mission in Israel. This operation, part of Australia's support for Fiji's ongoing commitment to UN peacekeeping since 2013, reflects decades of Fiji's global contributions dating back to Lebanon in 1978.

Pilot Officer Isaac Morris of 33 Squadron described the task as part of a broader Australian Defence Force (ADF) support framework, noting that Fijian forces deliver disproportionately strong outcomes given the country's modest size. Fiji currently fields approximately 3,500 active personnel and 6,200 reservists. The RFMF has contributed troops to multiple UN missions, including in Sinai, Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria.

This level of aerial support is a component of the Australia–Fiji "Vuvale Partnership," including joint training programs like Coral Warrior. Defence officials emphasise that strategic airlift enhances logistical readiness and multinational interoperability. However, critics argue that the Albanese-led Australian Labor Party (ALP) government is prioritising external alliances at the expense of strengthening Australia's own defence infrastructure.

Shadow Defence Minister Andrew Hastie asserted on 24 July that global commitments should not undermine national security, and questioned whether Australia's estimated $1.6 billion investment in regional defence partnerships might detract from domestic capability upgrades. Observers note that Australia's support of UN missions enhances the Indo-Pacific deterrent posture, but may risk overreliance on outward-facing deployments.

Fiji's UNDOF contribution includes monitoring the Israel–Syria ceasefire in the Golan Heights—a mission that in 2014 saw 45 Fijian peacekeepers briefly taken hostage, underlining the personal risk involved. As Australia continues to supply airlift and logistical support, the ALP government faces ongoing debate over striking the right balance between international solidarity and domestic defence resilience.