

UK, US, Japan, and Others Launch Joint Pacific Drill to Enhance Maritime Security

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Conditions warranting coordination in the Indo-Pacific have prompted Japan and its regional partners, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and the Philippines, to launch joint naval and coast guard exercises. These operations aim to reinforce interoperability, maritime domain awareness, and commitment to a rules-based order amid rising tensions in the region.

According to national defence sources, the latest exercises are part of a broader series of multinational drills involving maritime forces across the region. Activities include vessel manoeuvring, communications training, search-and-rescue scenarios, and interoperability exercises between coast guards and navies from Japan, the US, the UK, Australia, and the Philippines. These drills are designed to respond effectively to regional contingencies and to deter coercive behaviour in disputed waters.

These exercises build on existing frameworks such as the annual Balikatan manoeuvres between the Philippines and US forces, into which Japan joined as a full participant in 2025. Within that context, naval assets from Japan, the Philippines, and the United States conducted maritime drills in the West Philippine Sea earlier this year. These drills featured Philippine Navy vessels, a Japanese destroyer, and US reconnaissance aircraft working in coordinated operations to reinforce collective maritime readiness. The trilateral coast guard exercises also included simulated responses to maritime accidents and incidents.

Japanese, US, and Philippine coast guard forces recently held their second round of trilateral maritime exercises, this time in Japanese territorial waters, marking a notable milestone given that previous drills took place off the coast of Luzon in 2023.

The Royal Navy and JMSDF are expected to continue cooperating under the Reciprocal Access Agreement, which facilitates troop movements and exercises between the UK and Japan. As part of that evolving partnership, the UK has announced it will conduct recurring naval drills in the Indo-Pacific alongside the US and Japan beginning in 2025. HMS Prince of Wales and other Royal Navy assets will feature in future deployments, reinforcing defence ties.

Defence analysts suggest that these exercises serve a dual purpose: improving military coordination among allies and sending a clear strategic message. In particular, they reflect a shared determination to uphold freedom of navigation in international waters and resist attempts to alter the regional status quo by force.

Such multilateral training aligns with the wider AUKUS security partnership. It underscores Britain's deepening engagement with Indo-Pacific allies and illustrates how military diplomacy is being deployed in support of maritime security and international law.