

Philippines, Australia, Canada Hold Drills in West Philippine Sea

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The Philippines, Australia, and Canada carried out joint maritime activities in the West Philippine Sea under Exercise ALON 2025, underscoring growing regional defense cooperation.

The event, held on Saturday off El Nido, Palawan, featured the Philippine Navy's BRP Jose Rizal, the Royal Australian Navy's HMAS Brisbane, and the Royal Canadian Navy's HMCS

Ville de Québec. The ships engaged in multiple operations, including helicopter cross-deck landings, personnel transfers using MH-60 Seahawk helicopters and rigid-hull inflatable boats, as well as ship-to-ship interoperability drills.

According to the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), the engagement “reflects a shared resolve to uphold a rules-based international order in the Indo-Pacific and reinforces the commitment of the Philippines, Australia, and Canada to promote freedom of navigation, regional stability, and collective maritime security.”

Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. and Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Richard Marles personally observed a Combined Joint Forcible Entry Operation (CJFEO) at Long Beach in San Vicente, Palawan. The drill integrated Philippine and Australian amphibious units, supported by naval, air, and ground components.

The CJFEO displayed capabilities in naval gunfire support, amphibious assault, and maritime strike missions. Teodoro highlighted the extensive preparation behind the exercise. “A tremendous amount of logistics and planning has gone into what we witnessed here. Credit goes to not only those who actually participated in the assault, but those who went into the months of preparation,” he said.

He also noted the value of interoperability in responding to unforeseen situations. “Things like this are done with advanced planning, with the realization that in a moment’s notice, let’s say for a typhoon or for whatnot, we may have to operate together,” Teodoro added.

Marles praised the partnership, describing the drill as vital for cooperation between allies. “This exercise is about Australia and the Philippines, and there’s a Canadian and a US component to it. It’s about our relationship with those countries as well,” he said.

“But this is about building the interoperability between two countries which share values and have one intent, and that is to uphold the rules-based order in this region,” Marles emphasized.

The two defense leaders also observed an airfield seizure operation, further highlighting the capacity of Philippine and Australian forces to coordinate in complex scenarios.

Exercise ALON 2025, formally known as Exercise Amphibious and Land Operations 2025, is being conducted from August 15 to 29 within the Northern Luzon Command and Western Command Joint Operational Areas. Approximately 3,600 personnel from the AFP, Australian

Defense Force (ADF), United States Marine Corps, and Royal Canadian Navy are participating.

The activities focus on strengthening interoperability, combined readiness, and regional security cooperation.

Earlier, Teodoro and Marles convened the second Philippines-Australia Defense Ministers Meeting, where they reaffirmed both nations' commitment to deepening defense relations and supporting stability across the Indo-Pacific.