

# Pacific Peace Network

**Media Release**

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## **Pacific Peace Network calls for an end to all military exercises in the Pacific**

- Pacific nations calling for cancellation of Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercises due to COVID concerns
- Australia and some other nations ignoring pleas to cancel RIMPAC exercises

The Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercises are due to commence in Hawaiian waters on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> August, ignoring the pleas to cancel the exercises from the Hawaiian people and other nations of the Pacific, Philippines, Guam, NZ and Australia.

The strong messages coming from the Pacific Peace Network (PPN) and the Cancel RIMPAC Coalition are motivated by the desire to limit the spread of Covid and to reduce the threat of war between the US and China.

The PPN is a coalition of peace organisations from around the Pacific, including Hawai'i, Guam/Guahan Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand and the Philippines, which was set up after an Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN) conference in Darwin last year.

RIMPAC is the world's largest biannual maritime exercise, run by the US Navy and has been attended by up to 26 countries biennially since 1971. The partner nations Mexico, Chile, the United Kingdom, Netherlands, Israel and others will not take part in this year's exercise due to concerns about COVID-19. The PPN is greatly encouraged by this and calls on Australia and all other nations involved to follow the lead of these countries.

Australia is due to host the biennial land-based equivalent in central Queensland and the Great Barrier Reef in 2021.

World leaders, such as United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres and Pope Francis, are calling for the de-escalation of military build-up as the world grapples with a pandemic and climate change consequences.

PPN convenor Annette Brownlie from the Independent and Peaceful Australian Network, echoes these concerns and says "that rather than practising bombing ships and firing missiles through the ocean, RIMPAC parties could support the people in the Pacific to manage the fallout from climate change."

"If we want a secure and peaceful Pacific, we need to prioritise diplomacy and utilise the United Nations' extensive mechanisms to manage conflict, rather than undertaking massive military exercises," said Ms Brownlie.

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**For more information:**

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