

HON RON MARK, MINISTER OF DEFENCE

Surge Request for a New Zealand Defence Force Electrical Audit Team into the Multinational Force and Observers Mission – Release of Cabinet Documents

February 2020

This publication provides papers associated with Cabinet's November 2019 decision to agree to the New Zealand Defence Force supplying an Electrical Audit Team to conduct assessments of the mission's low voltage electrical infrastructure for up to four weeks.

The pack comprises the following documents:

- November 2019 Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee minute of decision *Multinational Force and Observers Mission: Surge Request for a New Zealand Defence Force Electrical Audit Team into the Multinational Force and Observers Mission* [ERS-19-MIN-0043]
- The associated Cabinet paper *Surge Request for a New Zealand Defence Force Electrical Audit Team into the Multinational Force and Observers Mission* [ERS-19-SUB-0043]

This pack has been released on the Ministry of Defence website, available at: www.defence.govt.nz/publications.

It has been necessary to withhold certain information in accordance with the following provisions of the Official Information Act 1982. Where information is withheld, the relevant sections of the Act are indicated in the body of the document.

Information is withheld where making it available would be likely to prejudice:

- the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the Government of New Zealand [section 6(a)].



Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee

Minute of Decision

This document contains information for the New Zealand Cabinet. It must be treated in confidence and handled in accordance with any security classification, or other endorsement. The information can only be released, including under the Official Information Act 1982, by persons with the appropriate authority.

Multinational Force and Observers Mission: Surge Request for a New Zealand Defence Force Electrical Audit Team into the Multinational Force and Observers Mission

Portfolio Defence

On 19 November 2019, the Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee:

- 1 **noted** that in October 2019, the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) received a request from the Headquarters of the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) in the Sinai Peninsula, Egypt, to supply an Electrical Audit Team to conduct assessments of the mission's low voltage electrical infrastructure for up to four weeks;
- 2 **noted** that New Zealand has contributed electrical expertise to the MFO since 2017 to support the mission's reconfiguration process;
- 3 **noted** that the unmitigated threat assessment for the MFO mission is s6(a)
- 4 **noted** that:
 - 4.1 New Zealand is mandated for up to 31 personnel in the MFO mission from 1 December 2019 [ERS-18-MIN-0016 and ERS-19-MIN-0017];
 - 4.2 the proposed short-term deployment of an Electrical Audit Team (of up to two people) would temporarily exceed the Cabinet-mandated numbers for the mission;
- 5 **noted** that the cost for the proposed deployment of the Electrical Audit Team is estimated at \$30,000, and that these costs can be met from within Vote Defence Force: Operations Contributing to New Zealand's Security, Stability and Interests;
- 6 **agreed** to the surge deployment of up to two electricians into the MFO mission for up to four weeks, commencing in 2019;
- 7 **noted** that New Zealand may receive additional surge deployment requests to the MFO mission for the temporary deployment of additional personnel above Cabinet-mandated maximum numbers;

- 8 **authorised** the Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Defence to approve any future surge deployments to the MFO mission for up to five personnel for up to 90 days.

Janine Harvey
Committee Secretary

Present:

Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern
Rt Hon Winston Peters (Chair)
Hon Grant Robertson
Hon Andrew Little
Hon David Parker
Hon Stuart Nash

Officials present from:

Office of the Prime Minister
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Hard-copy distribution:

Minister of Defence

Released by the Minister of Defence

Chair, External Relations and Security Committee

SURGE REQUEST FOR A NEW ZEALAND DEFENCE FORCE ELECTRICAL AUDIT TEAM INTO THE MULTINATIONAL FORCE AND OBSERVERS MISSION

Proposal

1. To seek approval for the surge deployment of up to two New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) electricians into the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) mission in the Sinai Peninsula, Egypt, for up to four weeks before the end of 2019, to conduct an electrical audit of the camp facilities; and to adjust the authorisation settings for future surge deployments to this mission.

Background

2. On 30 October 2019, the NZDF received a request from the MFO headquarters to deploy an Electrical Audit Team for up to four weeks to review the mission's low-voltage distribution system.
3. The Electrical Audit Team would identify and advise on electrical safety concerns and conduct remedial works (if required) in the MFO's South Camp, Forward Operating Base-North and remote site locations (see map in Annex A, and position descriptions in Annex B).

Background to the request

4. Since 2016 the MFO has undertaken a "reconfiguration process" to adapt the way the mission operates while it transitions from acting as a Treaty-monitoring peacekeeping force to one that also has a vital role to play in countering violent extremist elements on the Sinai Peninsula (including Islamic State-Sinai).
5. This reconfiguration process has involved a raft of measures to create greater efficiencies and make the mission safer for deployed personnel. Specifically, the mission [REDACTED] s6(a) [REDACTED] and has moved the majority of its personnel from the northern aspects of the Sinai Peninsula to the South Camp, [REDACTED] s6(a) [REDACTED].
6. To facilitate this move, the MFO has commissioned significant infrastructural works in South Camp (and its satellite facilities, Remote Sites 1 and 2) to ensure the camps are secure and can accommodate this increase in personnel numbers.
7. New Zealand has previously supported the reconfiguration process through the use of surge deployments – the deployment of additional personnel above Cabinet-mandated numbers to provide specialist capabilities related to a specific task (or in response to a changed operating threat or environment). In 2017 the NZDF surge deployed 33 engineers for six months in to construct perimeter fencing.

8. In 2017 - 2018 New Zealand also deployed two electricians for 12 months in support of the reconfiguration process. The recent request for an Electrical Audit Team (two personnel) for up to four weeks is an opportunity to consolidate that provision of technical expertise to the MFO, and demonstrate our ability to provide small but valuable contributions to one of our most significant and enduring commitments to Middle East regional stability (dating back to 1982).
9. The electrical audit team would join the 31 NZDF personnel in theatre, including MAJGEN Evan Williams, who will assume the role of MFO Force Commander in December 2019¹.

Approvals process

10. In the 2018 MFO mandate renewal paper [*CAB-18-MIN-0444 refers*], Defence indicated that short-notice or ad-hoc requests for surge capability (such as the 33-engineer contribution) might be requested as the MFO reconfiguration process advances. There might also be potential for further requests to provide shorter-term (up to 90 days), task-specific surge capability. The paper noted that such requests would be submitted for Cabinet consideration.
11. In order to allow for requests such as this to be approved without recourse to Cabinet, while still ensuring that Ministers have an appropriate degree of oversight, it is recommended that the Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Defence be given delegated authority to approve surges of up to ten additional personnel above the Cabinet-mandated maximum, for up to 90 days in duration. Should a surge deployment exceed the agreed time frame or personnel numbers, I will revert to Cabinet.

Risks

12. The unmitigated operational threat assessment is s6(a) and mission-specific threats (e.g. potential exposure to asbestos) will be addressed in the pre-deployment training process.
13. Headquarters Joint Forces New Zealand has confirmed that this request could be supported before the end of 2019 without impact on directed outputs.

Consultation

14. This paper has been prepared by the Ministry of Defence and New Zealand Defence Force. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet were consulted.

Financial Implications

15. The cost for the proposed deployment of the Electrical Audit Team is estimated at \$30,000. These costs can be met from within Vote Defence Force: Operations

¹These 31 personnel are deployed under two separate Cabinet mandates: 28 NZDF personnel are mandated until September 2020 [*CAB-18-MIN-0444 refers*] and the Force Commander plus two support personnel until March 2022 [*CAB-19-MIN-0360 refers*].

Contributing to New Zealand's Security, Stability and Interests. No further funding will be sought.

Proactive Release

16. A redacted version of this Cabinet paper would be proactively released should it be approved by Cabinet.

Recommendations

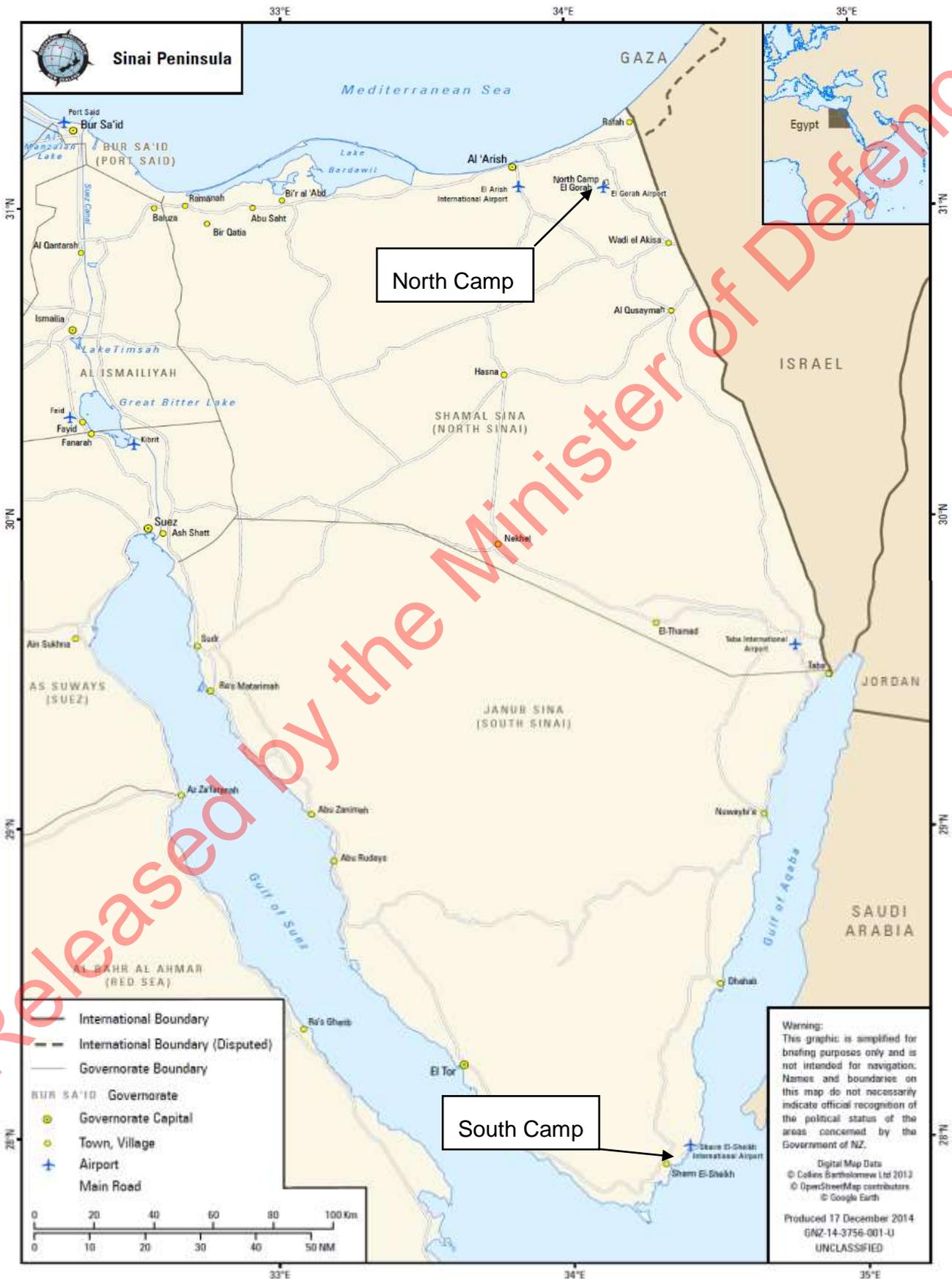
17. The Minister of Defence recommends that the Committee:

- a) **Note** that in October 2019 the New Zealand Defence Force received a request from the Headquarters of the Multinational Force and Observers to supply an Electrical Audit Team to conduct assessments of the mission's low voltage electrical infrastructure for up to four weeks;
- b) **Note** that New Zealand has contributed electrical expertise to the Multinational Force and Observers since 2017 to support the mission's reconfiguration process;
- c) **Note** that the unmitigated threat assessment for the Multinational Force and Observers is s6(a)
- d) **Note** that New Zealand is mandated for up to 31 personnel in the Multinational Force and Observers mission from 1 December 2019 and that this short-term deployment of an Electrical Audit Team (of up to two people) would temporarily exceed the Cabinet-mandated numbers for the mission;
- e) **Note** that the cost for the proposed deployment of the Electrical Audit Team is estimated at \$30,000 and these costs can be met from within Vote Defence Force: Operations Contributing to New Zealand's Security, Stability and Interests;
- f) **Agree** to the surge deployment of up to two electricians into the Multinational Force and Observers mission for up to four weeks, commencing in 2019;
- g) **Note** that New Zealand may receive additional surge deployment requests to the mission for the temporary deployment of additional personnel above Cabinet-mandated maximum numbers;
- h) **Agree** that the Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Defence be delegated the authority to approve any future surge deployments to the Multinational Force and Observers for up to ten personnel for up to 90 days.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Ron Mark
MINISTER OF DEFENCE

Annex A: Map of the Multinational Force and Observers mission



Annex B: Electrical Audit Team Position Descriptions

Rank	Duties	Personal Specification
Lance Corporal – Warrant Officer Class One (Equivalent)	The Electrical Audit Team will be responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ensuring the Multinational Force and Observers facilities are up to code (British electrical standards 7671 17th/18th edition); - conducting electrical inspections of the low voltage system; - assessing the trained state of locally employed electricians; and - providing recommendations to the Multinational Force and Observers on continuation training and system upgrades where required. 	<p>Knowledge and Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge of the British Electrical Standards 7671 17th/18th edition. - Able to coordinate, plan, prioritise and supervise electrical projects. - Able to work in a multinational environment with awareness of different cultures. - Good written and verbal communication skills. <p>Qualification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National Trade qualification as an Electrical Inspector as per the standards of the Electrical Workers Registration Board (EWRB) NZ. <p>Experience Level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Registered as an Electrician for not less than three years, and completed not less than three years (6,000 hours) practical experience in carrying out prescribed electrical work that is satisfactory to the EWRB. - Experience in quality inspections and safety assurance.