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PM SOGAVARE CLARIFIES MISINFORMATION ON US COAST GUARD VESSEL

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PM SOGAVARE CLARIFIES MISINFORMATION ON US COAST GUARD VESSEL

Solomon Islands Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare has clarified some



US Coast Guard Cutter Oliver Henry

misinformation currently carried on international media about the visit by the US Coast Guard Cutter Oliver Henry and HMAS Spey.

Speaking at a ceremony to welcome the visiting United States Hospital Ship USNS Mercy in Honiara this evening, Sogavare said there had been a delay in the granting of

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entry into the country to the US Coast Guard Cutter Oliver Henry due primarily to the appropriate information not sent to the Office of Prime Minister on time.

The Prime Minister's Office sought and received the required information on 20th August 2022. Approval was granted for the US Coast Guard Cutter Oliver Henry to enter the country and participate in the FFA operation Island Chief event on 20th August 2022.



HMAS Spey

"Unfortunately, by the time the approval was communicated on the evening of 20th August 2022, the Ship's captain had decided to leave our waters," Sogavare said.

In relation to the HMAS Spey, the approval process to enter Solomon Islands was aborted when the Prime Minister's Office received notification from the British High Commission in Honiara, that they were no longer seeking approval for HMAS Spey to enter the country.

The delay in these approvals demonstrate the need for the government to review and refine its approval requirements and procedures for visiting military vessels to Solomon Islands.

"To this end we have requested our partners to give us time to review and put in place our new processes before sending further requests for military vessels to enter the country. Once the new mechanism is in place, we will inform you all. We anticipate the new process to be smoother and timelier," Sogavare said.

The government has asked all partner countries with plans to conduct naval visits or patrols to put them on hold until a revised national mechanism is in place. These will universally apply to all visiting naval vessels.

Solomon Islands have had unfortunate experiences of foreign naval vessels entering the country's waters during the course of the year without diplomatic clearance granted, hence would like to avoid such incidents from reoccurring.

Solomon Islands would like to see partnership is in place to build national capacity to police our Exclusive Economic Zones. Once the process and procedures are in place suspension of naval vessel visits will be lifted.

The Government have communicated its position to all countries requesting to send in naval ships into Solomon Islands waters.

Meanwhile, the Government and people of Solomon Islands welcomed the visit of United States Hospital Ship USNS Mercy now in Honiara.

The United States Medical team in partnership with the Ministry of Health and Medical Services will be carrying out a number of health programmes in the Capital and in some provinces over the next few days.

-GCU Press

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