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News

Sea Shepherd Commits to Sending Ship to Tuvalu to Support Police Patrols Against Illegal Fishing

Wednesday, 10 May, 2023

Sea Shepherd Global has signed a historic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the government of Tuvalu, committing to send a ship to the South Pacific island country to support law enforcement efforts to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing through at-sea patrols.

Under the MoU, signed by the Honorable Simon Kofe, Tuvalu’s Minister of Justice, Communications & Foreign Affairs, the 54.6-meter vessel *Allankay* will accommodate a detachment from the Tuvalu Police Service with the authority to board, inspect and arrest fishing vessels engaged in criminal activity in the sovereign waters of Tuvalu.

Minister Kofe addressed delegates to the COP26 climate conference from a podium where he stood knee-deep in the Pacific Ocean, in order to highlight the threat that rising sea levels pose to South Pacific nations from the frontlines of the climate emergency.



Illegal fishing also poses a threat to Tuvalu as more than 50% of the economy depends on fisheries.

In recent years, satellite imagery has spotlighted the presence of so-called 'dark vessels' operating in the waters of Tuvalu. A 'dark vessel' is one that is not transmitting their position through a mandatory location transponder, likely in an attempt to elude authorities and fish illegally.

“Use of the Allankay will allow the government of Tuvalu to make such intelligence actionable, as the ship has the range and endurance to allow for law enforcement agents stationed on board to control the entirety of Tuvalu’s maritime space. We know that there are operators out there fishing illegally, and we are honored to provide the platform that allows for these criminals to be arrested and brought back to Funafuti to face justice.”

Peter Hammarstedt, Sea Shepherd Global's Director of Campaigns.

Ambassador Shivshankar Nair, the Government of Tuvalu’s Envoy for the Oceans, Climate Change and The Commonwealth, contacted Sea Shepherd Global after learning of the conservation successes in the Central African country of Gabon, where Sea Shepherd Global has been working for seven years.

Sea Shepherd Global is grateful for the introductions made by the Honorable Professor Lee White, Gabon’s Minister of Forests, Oceans, Environment and Climate Change.

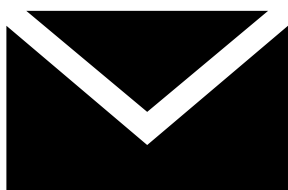
Ambassador Nair determined that the innovative approach of providing vessel support to countries with the political will to combat illegal fishing was a natural fit with Minister Kofe’s dynamic leadership on conservation issues, and facilitated communications.

Since 2016, Sea Shepherd Global has collaborated with governments around the African continent, assisting eight country partners—Gabon, Liberia, Tanzania, The Gambia, Benin, São Tomé and Príncipe, Sierra Leone and Namibia—to arrest 85 vessels for illegal fishing and other fisheries crimes.

“Sea Shepherd Global is excited to bring a model that we know works to the South Pacific for the first time. We know the impact of these patrols. In the places where we work, illegal fishing has been largely eliminated. We are proud to support the leadership of the government of Tuvalu in the fight against illegal fishing”, said Alex Cornelissen, Sea Shepherd Global’s CEO.

Allankay is being provided at no-cost to the government of Tuvalu.

Minister Kofe addresses delegates to the COP26 climate conference in 2021 (photo: Tuvalu Ministry of Justice Communications and Foreign Affairs)
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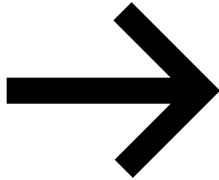
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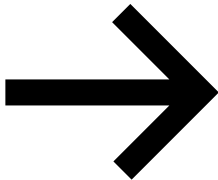
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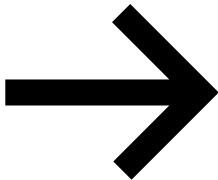
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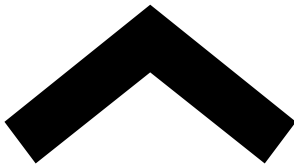
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