

French Naval Training Group “*Jeanne d’Arc*” in Indonesian Archipelago for a weeks-long presence and major exercise KOMODO

France and Indonesia have enjoyed a long standing relationship in the field of defence with the both nations contributing to the global and regional peace and stability. Defence cooperation falls out into a Strategic dialogue (the Indonesia-France Defence Dialogue, held every year), armament cooperation and concrete military cooperation. Our forces stand together in UN Peace Keeping Operations in the Middle-East and Africa, our military exchange know-how and regularly meet on land and at sea.

The countries’ respective Navies, France’s “Marine Nationale” and “Tentara Nasional Indonesia - Angkatan Laut” also take their share of this joint endeavor. France and Indonesia indeed share a mutual interest in safeguarding sea traffic and freedom of navigation in compliance with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Since President Joko Widodo and François Hollande issued a joint statement on Maritime cooperation on March 29th 2017, naval interactions have been steadily increasing with port visits (the latest being in Surabaya and Jayapura), exercises at sea and training and education programmes (in naval artillery, cartography, hydrography). Among the latter, The French Mission “*Jeanne d’Arc*”, a French Navy sea training mission carried out by a task group of two units, opens a position for an Indonesian cadet every second year. This year will see the deployment of one amphibious assault and command ship, *Dixmude*, with her escort, the stealth destroyer *Surcouf*.

For the second year in a row, the “*Jeanne d’Arc*” training group will be sailing the Southeast Asian seas. Year 2018 will see an unprecedented series of port visits in Indonesia with two stopovers in Jakarta and Bali, continued with the participation of the training group in Indonesia’s bi-yearly major multinational exercise “KOMODO”, in Lombok, with a focus on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR). This field of operations has been a continued subject of cooperation between France and Indonesia.

Most notably, the French mission *Jeanne d’Arc* participated, in the framework of operation “*Beryx*” in 2005, which mobilized three major naval units, about a dozen helicopters and one maritime patrol aircraft from the French Navy. Many French Naval officers took part in this operation, among them then commander, now Rear-Admiral Denis Bertrand, commander French joint forces for the Pacific, who will participate in the Komodo exercise in the coming weeks. Indonesian observers will also join the French major HADR exercise “*Southern Cross 2018*”, with a view to possibly become full participants as soon as in the next edition.

While navigating the sovereign archipelagic waters of Indonesia, French Navy Ship *Dixmude* and *Surcouf* will interact with the Indonesian Navy with, among others, three Indonesian navy officers embarked on these two major units. One of these Indonesian officers will, afterwards, join the main Naval Base of Toulon (southern France) for an expert course on Naval Artillery, next May.

This year will also see an exceptional combination of events that illustrates the convergence of British and French endeavors in the region, in support of European Nations' engagement, with HMS Albion calling in Jakarta on the same dates (22-24th April) and a UK Royal Marines helicopter detachment (around 40 men and women) deployed onboard FNS *Dixmude*. This underlines both countries' common engagement, as well as that of other European Nations, to promote the rule of the Law of the Sea as well as a responsible multilateral approach for the preservation of the regional and global orders.

After their calls in Indonesia, *Dixmude* and *Surcouf* will set sail to Darwin, from where they will again cross Indonesian archipelagic waters towards Ho-Chi-Minh City, thus completing half a circumnavigation before heading West, back to their homeport in Toulon, France.