

France's military presence in the Indo-Pacific

France's military presence in the Indo-Pacific aims to protect France's sovereignty, its nationals, its territories and in its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The permanent forces in the Indo-Pacific region also play a key role in regional cooperation.

Five high commands in the region

France has a permanent structure of armed forces in five high commands that cover the entire Indo-Pacific region. These forces are made up of:

- Three sovereignty forces that are the French Armed Forces in the Southern Zone of the Indian Ocean (FAZSOI), the French Armed Forces of New Caledonia (FANC), and the French Armed Forces in French Polynesia (FAPF);
- Two stationed forces: the French Forces in the United Arab Emirates (FFEAU) and the French Forces in Djibouti (FFDJ).

This defence posture involves a total of 7,000 people from Army, Marine and Air and Space Force units. It is being updated under the 2024-2030 Military Programming Act, which has provided for a provisional budget for French overseas territories of approximately €13 billion. This Act will finance the delivery of six overseas patrol boats and one corvette as well as a fleet of logistical helicopters.

The cornerstone of the protection of French sovereignty and regional cooperation

In addition to sovereignty missions, permanent forces are deployment platforms for military forces in their respective regional environments, subject to strategic competition and where few partners have capabilities for action. Coordinated with regular deployments of high-level capabilities from metropolitan France, they help maintain free and open access to common areas, safe maritime routes, non-proliferation and strategic stability.

French forces, in close coordination with France's partners, help secure the maritime area surrounding French territories, particularly through maritime surveillance operations and those to fight illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

They also, in coordination with civilian government services, respond to natural disasters and also play a leading role in evacuating French nationals and in providing Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR).

The permanent forces also contribute to training programmes initiated by France to better meet the needs of Indo-Pacific countries, especially in the areas of maritime safety and security in the Academies of the Pacific and Indian Ocean and the Regional Centre for Maritime Studies in Sri Lanka.