

PRESS RELEASE

Conference to arrest Pacific transnational crime

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Pacific leaders, law enforcement officials and academics will be brought together to address transnational crime in the Pacific region at the inaugural *Pacific Regional Law Enforcement Conference* (PRLEC) held in Fiji from August 1.

Drug trafficking and other transnational criminal activity in the Pacific Islands has evolved significantly due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with a rise in local actor's participation in transnational criminal networks.

PRLEC will be facilitated by the Australia Pacific Security College in partnership with the Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police (PICP), the Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO), and the Pacific Immigration Development Community (PIDC).

“PRLEC2022 will be the first large-scale meeting of police, customs and immigration officials from across the Pacific with academic partners,” Director of the Australian Pacific Security College, Jay Caldwell said.

Head of Secretariat for PIDC, Ioane Alama said: “this gathering provides us with an important opportunity to look at emerging and existing issues together for the first time through a different lens.”

OCO's Acting Head of Secretariat, Irma Daphney Stone said: “transnational crime is real, it negatively impacts our society, physically, socially and economically. The challenge is ours collectively to face, map a course and activate a plan, to harness our resources against the rising tide of criminal syndicates.”

The theme of the conference is ‘Partnering to Disrupt Transnational Crime in the Pacific’, examining how security networks can be strengthened to beat criminal networks.

PRLEC is a ground-breaking opportunity to establish a strong network of law enforcement practitioners across sectors to disrupt the currently growing criminal syndicates in the Pacific.

The conference will be practitioner-focused and research-informed. An action plan based on the conference's outcomes will be decided during a closed-door session with law enforcement officials on the fourth day.

“This the first time for a long time that PICP will be in a position to talanoa with colleagues and others on advancing Our Blue Pacific, Safer Together”, Nicholas Brown, Executive Director of the PICP, said.



The conference will be opened by Fiji's Minister for Defence, National Security and Policing, the Hon Inia Seruiratu, and will be closed by Pacific Islands Forum Secretary-General, Mr Henry Puna.

The conference will be held on 1-3 August 2022 in Denarau, Fiji, with a closed-door session for law enforcement officials on 4 August.

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