



# France Must Pay Its Dues to the Pacific

9th June 2025

## MEDIA STATEMENT

France's credentials in hosting a global ocean conference have been challenged by Pacific groups, movements and civil society organisations, who believe that unless it is accountable for its actions in the Pacific, it is just an attempt at rebranding.

The call for accountability comes amidst the French-sponsored United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC) in Nice this week, at which President Macron will be hosting the France-Pacific Summit. French officials have referred to the UNOC event as a coming together “...in the true spirit of Talanoa” and one that would be inconceivable without the Pacific.

While acknowledging the importance of leveraging global partnerships for urgent climate action and ocean protection through the UNOC process, Pacific civil society firmly believes that our leaders must hold France accountable for its past actions and not allow it to launder its dirty linen in ‘Blue Pacific’ and ‘critical transition’ narratives.

France's claims of being a responsible steward of the ocean are undermined by its historical actions in the Pacific. This includes:

- A brutal colonial legacy dating back to the mid-1800s, with the annexation of island nations now known as Kanaky-New Caledonia and Ma’ohi Nui-French Polynesia;
- A refusal to complete the decolonisation process, and in fact the perpetuation of the colonial condition, particularly for the aforementioned ‘territories’ on the UN decolonisation list. In Kanaky-New Caledonia, for instance, France and its agents continue to renege on longstanding decolonisation commitments, while weaponising

democratic ideals and processes such as 'universal' voting rights to deny the fundamental rights of the indigenous population to self-determination;

- 30 years of nuclear violence in Ma'ohi Nui-French Polynesia with 193 test detonations - 46 in the atmosphere and close to 150 under the Moruroa and Fangataufa atolls, irradiating both land and sea, and people. Approximately 90% of the local population was exposed to radioactive fallout, resulting in long-term health impacts, including elevated rates of cancer and other radiation-related illnesses;
- Active efforts to obscure the true extent of its nuclear violence in Ma'ohi Nui-French Polynesia, diverting resources to discredit independent research and obstructing transparency around health and environmental impacts. These actions reveal a persistent pattern of denial and narrative control that continues to undermine compensation efforts and delay justice for victims and communities;
- French claims to approximately one-third of the Pacific's combined EEZ, and to being the world's second largest ocean state, accruing largely from its so-called Pacific dependencies;
- The supply of French military equipment, and the 1985 bombing of the Greenpeace flagship 'Rainbow Warrior' by French secret service agents — a state-sponsored terrorist attack, the 40th anniversary of which is marked this year.

Since the late 1980s, France has worked to build on diplomatic, development and defence fronts to garner support from Pacific governments. This includes development assistance through the Agence Française de Développement (AFD), Asian Development Fund, language and cultural exchanges, scientific collaboration and humanitarian assistance.

A strong diplomatic presence in Pacific capitals as well as a full schedule of high-level exchanges, including a triennial France-Oceania leaders' Summit commencing in 2003, together function to enhance proximity with and inclination towards Paris sentiments and priorities.

French leadership at this UNOC process is once again central to its ongoing efforts to rebrand itself as a global leader on climate action, a champion of ocean protection, and a promoter of sovereignty.

Nothing can be further from the truth.

The reality is that France is rather more interested in strengthening its position as a middle power in an Indo-Pacific rather than a Pacific framework, and as a balancing power within the context of big-power rivalry between the US and China, all of which undermines rather than enhances Pacific sovereignty.

And, our leaders must not allow France to build this new global image on the foundations of its atrocities against Pacific peoples and our ocean continent.

Pacific civil society, therefore, calls on France:

- For immediate and irreversible commitments and practical steps to bring its colonial presence in the Pacific to an end before the conclusion, in 2030, of the 4th International Decade on the Eradication of Colonialism;
- To acknowledge and take responsibility for the oceanic and human harms caused by 30 years of nuclear violence in Ma'ohi Nui–French Polynesia, and to commit to full and just reparations, including support for affected communities, environmental remediation of test sites, and full public disclosure of all health and contamination data.

We further call on Pacific Leaders to:

- Keep France accountable for its multiple and longstanding debt to Pacific people;
- Ensure that Ma'ohi Nui-French Polynesia and Kanaky-New Caledonia remain on the UN list of non-self-governing territories to be decolonised (UN decolonisation list).

Pacific leaders must ensure that France does not succeed in laundering its soiled linen – soiled by the blood of thousands of Pacific Islanders who resisted colonial occupation and/or who were used as test subjects for its industrial-military machinery – in the UNOC process.

– ENDS –

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**ENDORSED BY:**

<b>1.</b> 350.org Pacific	<b>25.</b> Medical Association for Prevention of War (Australia)
<b>2.</b> Alice Springs Peace Action Think Tank (ASPATT)	<b>26.</b> Moana Nui Action Alliance
<b>3.</b> Alliance for Future Generations-Fiji	<b>27.</b> Moruroa e Tātou
<b>4.</b> Centre for Counter Hegemonic Studies	<b>28.</b> Nuclear Truth Project
<b>5.</b> Civil Society Forum of Tonga	<b>29.</b> Pacific Climate Custodians
<b>6.</b> Citizens' Nuclear Information Center	<b>30.</b> Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC)
<b>7.</b> Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety	<b>31.</b> Pacific Islands Council of Qld Inc.
<b>8.</b> Council of Pacific Education (COPE)	<b>32.</b> Pacific Migration Partners
<b>9.</b> DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era)	<b>33.</b> Pacific Network on Globalisation (PANG)
<b>10.</b> DJ PTE LTD	<b>34.</b> PacificwinPacific
<b>11.</b> Fiji Nuclear Veterans and Families Association	<b>35.</b> Pacific Youth Platform
	<b>36.</b> Palau Resource Institute (PRI)
	<b>37.</b> Peace Movement Aotearoa

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12. Fiji Women's Crisis Centre</li> <li>13. For Mother Earth</li> <li>14. Global Candlelight Action-Hamburg</li> <li>15. GPPAC Pacific</li> <li>16. Hawai'i Institute for Human Rights</li> <li>17. Hunter Peace Group</li> <li>18. International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN)</li> <li>19. ICAN Aotearoa New Zealand</li> <li>20. International Peace Research Association</li> <li>21. JOJIKUM</li> <li>22. LABRATS</li> <li>23. LEAF of Hudson Valley</li> <li>24. Marshallese Educational Initiative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>38. Project Sepik Inc</li> <li>39. Snake River Alliance</li> <li>40. Social Empowerment and Education Programme (SEEP)</li> <li>41. Soqosoqo Vakamarama iTaukei</li> <li>42. TAPOL</li> <li>43. Te Kuaka</li> <li>44. Ulin Maho Association</li> <li>45. West Papua Action Tamaki</li> <li>46. World Without Wars and Violence, Greece</li> <li>47. Vanuatu Indigenous Land Defense Desk (VILDD)</li> <li>48. Youngsolwara Pacific</li> <li>49. Young Women's Christian Association of Fiji</li> </ul>
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The following organisations, movements and alliances endorsed the statement after its official release on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2025, in response to ongoing expressions of solidarity and support.

**POST PUBLICATION ENDORSEMENTS (as of 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025):**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Aid/Watch</li> <li>2. Asia Pacific Network of Environmental Defenders</li> <li>3. Australian Association for Pacific Studies</li> <li>4. Criobe</li> <li>5. Diverse Voices and Action (DIVA) for Equality</li> <li>6. ECPAT/SELHAC</li> <li>7. Emerging Leader Forum Alumni</li> <li>8. Finafinau</li> <li>9. Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment - Philippines</li> <li>10. LA PAUSE DÉCOLONIALE</li> <li>11. Mindeulle: Korea-Japan Youth Initiative for Anti-Nuclear Peace</li> <li>12. Ministry of Health and Human Services (MOHHS), Republic of the Marshall Islands</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>13. MISA4ThePacific</li> <li>14. nixe - habitat nucléaire</li> <li>15. Oxfam in the Pacific</li> <li>16. Pacific Sexuality and Gender Diverse Network (PSGDN)</li> <li>17. Palau Entrepreneurs for Growth (PEFG)</li> <li>18. Pax Christi Flanders</li> <li>19. Qazaq Nuclear Frontline Coalition (QNFC)</li> <li>20. REO-UPF</li> <li>21. Sophie Regnier Wellbeing</li> <li>22. Starfire Cleaning</li> <li>23. Sustainable Oceania Solutions</li> <li>24. Te Motu</li> <li>25. Te Ngaru Tu O Nukuroa</li> <li>26. Tuvalu Climate Action Network (TuCAN)</li> <li>27. Vanuatu Human Rights Coalition</li> <li>28. Vanuatu Young Women for Change</li> <li>29. Vatu Mauri Consortium</li> <li>30. WPOI.ORG</li> </ul>
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