

# Embassy of Japan

## Tonga

# PRESS RELEASE

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### **JMSDF JS “SHIRANUI” port call on Tonga**

Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) destroyer JS SHIRANUI, called on Tonga from Monday, 28 August to Wednesday, 30 August 2023 as part of its Indo-Pacific Deployment 2023 (IPD23), in the Pacific region.

Their Royal Highness Crown Prince Tupouto‘a ‘Ulukalala and Crown Princess Sinaitakala Tuku‘aho received the JMSDF’s Salute of a Guard of Honor, before being guest of honor at a welcoming reception aboard SHIRANUI on Monday evening. Hon. Samiu Vaipulu, Deputy Prime Minister of Tonga, Lord Fakafanua, Speaker of Tonga’s Legislative Assembly, Hon. Lord Chief Justice Michael Whitten attended the reception along with Head of Missions, Capt Sione ‘Ulakai, Deputy Chief of Defence, and members of His Majesty’s Armed Forces.

In the keynote address by HRH Crown Prince Tupouto‘a ‘Ulukalala during the reception, he welcomed the Commanding Officer of SHIRANUI, Commander MINAMI Kazuhiro and his crew to Tonga and thanked H.E. Mr. MUNENAGA Kensaku, Ambassador of Japan to Tonga for nurturing the relationship between both countries. “Your efforts for Indo-Pacific maritime peace and security contribute to Tonga’s. The time away from your county and families is demonstrative to us of your commitment. Our leaders value this. So they strive to improve our regional collective action through groups like the SPDMM (South Pacific Defence Ministers Meeting) I hope together, as Naval professionals, you can enjoy Tonga as much as we do, whilst making our shared seas safer” stated HRH the Crown Prince of Tonga.

A “kagamibiraki” ceremony, the opening of sake casks to bring in good fortune and mark the historical occasion was also honored by Their Royal Highnesses, and Commander MINAMI also presented a special gift in honor of Their presences aboard SHIRANUI.

Commander MINAMI shared that SHIRANUI is on a four-month deployment to the Indo-Pacific region “to contribute to maintaining and strengthening the regional peace and stability, in cooperation with the militaries of other countries, in compliance with international laws and rules, to realize a ‘Free and Open Indo-Pacific.’ This Pacific Ocean is the part of significant Sea Lane of Communication for Japan and it is vital not only for Tonga, but also for Japan, to ensure our own development and prosperity,” he said.

H.E Mr. MUNENAGA Kensaku, Ambassador of Japan to Tonga was grateful on the successful call of SHIRANUI in Tonga and the critical importance of the joint exercises to strengthen cooperation among naval personnel. “Another vital aspect of this visit is the return of face-to-face interaction, which strengthens the relations among partners. I believe that through various activities our relation, friendship and cooperation will be enriched and further developed.”

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SHIRANUI is the third JMSDF ship to call on Tonga following OHSUMI that delivered emergency relief supplies after the Hunga-Tonga Hunga-Haapai dual disasters in January 2022, and KIRISAME last year in August under the 2022 Indo-Pacific Deployment. .

The port call included good will exercise, sport and culinary exchange before the destroyer departed on Wednesday, to Guam.

END

Attached: Photos

Photos:



HRH Crown Prince Tupouto'a 'Ulukalala being presented a gift from SHIRANUI by Commanding Officer, Commander MINAMI Kazuhiro aboard the destroyer on Monday evening, 28 August 2023.

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The Guard of Honor Salute in honor of Their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Tupouto'a 'Ulukalala and Crown Princess Sinaitakala Tuku'aho by SHIRANUI



Aboard SHIRANUI for the welcoming reception on Monday, 28 August.

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The KAGAMIBIRAKI ceremony, to open a sake casks to mark the port call on Tonga.



Japanese delicacy served for Their Royal Highnesses aboard SHIRANUI.

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H.E. Mr. MUNENAGA Kensaku, Ambassador of Japan to Tonga with Commanding Officer of SHIRANUI, Commander MINAMI Kazuhiro (second from left), along with CPO KUDO, LT CDR NAKAYAMA and LT COL HIRANO after SHIRANUI arrived at Vuna Wharf.



Base tour guided by CDR. Holokaukau Lakai, at Touliki Masefield Naval Base.

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Sports exchange with His Majesty's Armed Forces.



Culinary exchange on board SHIRANUI with His Majesty's Armed Forces.

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H.E. Mr. MUNENAGA Kensaku farewell Commander MINAMI Kazuhiro and SHIRANUI on Wednesday morning, 30 August 2023.



JSMD F Destroyer JS SHIRANUI at Vuna wharf on its three days call on Tonga.