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Subject: DEATH OF SAILOR ONBOARD HMAS TOOWOOMBA IN MUMBAI
Comment:
Action Area CN

LIMITED DISTRIBUTION - NOT TO BE FORWARDED

SENSITIVITY: High - Media interest noting involves death of a sailor onboard an Australian Ship

KEY ISSUES:

- HMAS *Toowoomba* is conducting a port visit alongside Mumbai, on return from Operation SLIPPER duties in the Middle East Area of Operation.
- At approximately 10:30 am local time (1600 L), a sailor was discovered in a compartment in the ship with a gunshot wound to the chest.
- As part of resuscitation attempts the sailor was transferred to an ambulance on the wharf. The sailor was declared deceased by the Ship's Medical Officer at 11:30 am local time (1700 L) and was then transferred to a cold room facility onboard the ship for custody until arrangements are finalised for a return to Australia.
- The scene of the incident was secured and the Ship's Naval Police Coxswain has preserved evidence.
- Arrangements are currently underway to deploy an Australian Defence Force Investigative Service member to the ship as soon as possible to assist in evidence collection. Actions are underway to organise the repatriation of the deceased sailor to Australia.

- The Defence Community Organisation has been informed and is establishing a notification team and bereavement support team for the Next-of-Kin.
- Support is being provided to the ships company by a Defence Psychologist and Chaplain who were embarked at the time.

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BACKGROUND:

A sailor was discovered with a gunshot wound to the chest in a compartment onboard the ship at approximately 10:30am local time (1600 L). The sailor was part of the Force Protection Party of Duty Watch. A weapon was located at the scene.

The sailor was moved to an ambulance on the wharf, however was declared deceased by the Ship's Medical Officer at 11:30am (1700 L). The deceased member has been placed in a cold room onboard the ship whilst arrangements are being made for repatriation.

Support is being provided to the ships company by a Defence Psychologist and Chaplain who were embarked at the time.

Arrangements are being made to deploy an Australian Defence Force Investigative Service investigator to the ship at first available opportunity.

TALKING POINTS

- I can advise that there has been an incident onboard HMAS *Toowoomba* while the ship was alongside in Mumbai, India.
- This incident is currently being investigated by Defence and Embassy officials.
- It would be inappropriate to make any further comment while the incident is being investigated.

If asked

- The incident has resulted in the death of a member of the ship's company.
- Next -of- Kin of the deceased member is currently being advised by the Defence Community Organisation and Navy staff.

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