

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2023

Statement on United States Recognition of the Cook Islands and the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations

September 25, 2023

Today I am proud to announce that the United States recognizes the Cook Islands as a sovereign and independent state and will establish diplomatic relations between our two nations.

The United States has a long history of cooperation with the Cook Islands, dating back to World War II when the U.S. military built airport runways in the northernmost atoll Penrhyn and in Aitutaki. Today's announcement will enable us to expand the scope of this enduring partnership as we seek to tackle the challenges that matter most to our peoples' lives, from countering illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, to combatting climate change, to building inclusive economic growth, to advancing a free and open Indo-Pacific region, and beyond.

The United States plans to work closely with the Cook Islands, the Pacific Islands Forum, and the Pacific Community to bolster Pacific regionalism. Together, we intend to align the objectives of the United States first-ever Pacific Partnership Strategy with the Pacific's own priorities as embodied in the Pacific Islands Forum 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent. And the United States looks forward to participating in the upcoming PIF leaders summit to support Pacific voices, Pacific choices, and the Pacific way.

The history and the future of the Pacific Islands and the United States are inextricably linked. The United States recognition of the Cook Islands and the establishment of diplomatic relations will not only strengthen the ties between our nations, it will help ensure that our shared future is more secure, more prosperous, and more free, for our people and people around the world.

Categories: Statements by the President : Cook Islands, U.S. recognition and establishment of diplomatic relations.

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