

AFP joins cooperative effort after Tongan riots

Unprecedented civil unrest in Nuku'alofa, the capital city of Tonga, on 16 November led the Tongan Government to request law enforcement assistance from the Australian and New Zealand governments, resulting in the deployment of AFP personnel within two days of the request.

On 18 November 35 AFP personnel left Canberra followed by seven forensic and technical specialists just days after.

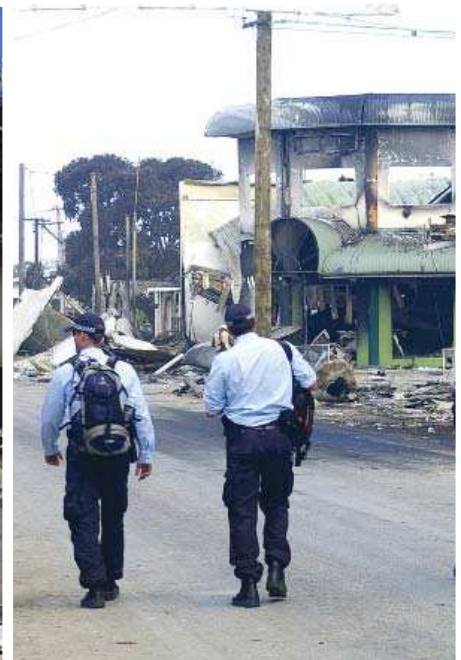
The National Manager for the International Deployment Group (IDG), Assistant Commissioner Paul Jevtovic, said the prompt response by Australian and New Zealand police and defence personnel provided an immediate impact on assisting the Tongan police to restore law and order as part of *Operation Tokoni* (Tongan for helping).

"We have been involved in a wide range of functions including crime scene management, forensic examinations, investigations into the deaths of seven Tongan nationals, operational planning, witness interviews, brief compilation and protection of key infrastructure.

"The AFP has a long-standing relationship with the Tongan Police Force through its members working alongside us in the Solomon Islands and participation in AFP training programs in Australia. It is important that Australian police help our law enforcement partners in the Pacific



AFP members departing Canberra on 18 November.



AFP members survey the damage in the wake of mid-November riots in Nuku'alofa.

to maintain civil order and to prevent further outbreaks of violence,"

"Most importantly, our arrival allowed a very tired Tongan Police Force (TPF) to re-group after the riots and gave them reassurance that they had support from within the region. The TPF have done a very good job in difficult

circumstances and I am fortunate as the National Manager IDG to be continually exposed to the professional and committed manner in which AFP personnel volunteer for and respond to our international policing demands and challenges," Assistant Commissioner Jevtovic said.