



# National Fisheries Authority

## Papua New Guinea

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **NFA SURVEILLANCE REFORMS DELIVERS RESULTS: APPREHENSION OF IUU FISHING VESSELS IN THE GULF OF PAPUA**

**PORT MORESBY:** The National Fisheries Authority (NFA), in collaboration with security forces and relevant government agencies, this week apprehended three foreign Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing vessels in the Gulf of Papua waters. The vessels were intercepted by the Fisheries Patrol Vessel (FPV) ILAKINI.

NFA Managing Director, Mr. Justin Ilakini, said the NFA is pleased to provide an update on the IUU fishing activities identified during recent operations conducted by one of its Fisheries Patrol Vessels, in the Gulf of Papua.

“Two of the apprehended vessels have been safely escorted to Port Moresby and are currently anchored pending legal proceedings,” stated Mr. Ilakini. “The third vessel began taking on water during transit. In the interest of crew safety, all illegal fishermen on board were evacuated before the vessel was sunk.”

“In accordance with directives from the Prime Minister, the two vessels will be disposed off following court proceedings scheduled for 16 February,” reiterated Mr. Ilakini. “The NFA remains steadfast in its commitment to resource protection and will continue to intensify surveillance and enforcement operations across PNG waters.”

“A total of 27 foreign illegal fishermen are alleged to have been involved, with nine fishermen assigned to each vessel. The illegal fishermen from the IUU fishing vessels are currently in police custody,” said Mr. Ilakini.

Mr. Ilakini emphasised that the operation demonstrates the effectiveness of reforms introduced to strengthen fisheries resource protection. These include increased at-sea surveillance, the establishment and operationalisation of a strengthened national fisheries surveillance platform, deployment of State-owned patrol vessels equipped with high-tech drone technology, and enhanced compliance monitoring under updated fisheries management frameworks.

“These measures form part of broader sector reforms aimed at combating IUU fishing, protecting PNG’s marine resources, and ensuring the sustainable utilisation of fisheries stocks.”

FPV ILAKINI is one of three surveillance vessels commissioned by the NFA in December 2025, alongside FPV VANIMO and FPV DARU.

By safeguarding Papua New Guinea’s Exclusive Economic Zone and deterring illegal operators, the NFA is directly contributing to the Government’s policy direction to maximise direct revenue to the State from the fisheries sector. Effective enforcement ensures that only compliant operators benefit from access to PNG waters, thereby protecting national economic interests and ensuring long-term sustainability.

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