



Consortium of Indo-Pacific
Researchers

Indo-Pacific Weekly Mail Jan 15 - 21, 2024

Greetings Colleagues,

The Consortium is pleased to share its latest newsletter for the Indo-Pacific. Press reply button for your feedback and comments.

Indian Ocean Island Nation Comoros Announces New President



Figure 1: Figure 1: Comoros President Azali Assoumani //IMAGE/BBC

Comoros incumbent President and ex-military leader Azali Assoumani has been elected for a fourth-year term of President in the elections held on Jan.14. As per media reports he secured 63% of the vote amid the lower turnout and the boycott from the opposition. On contrary, [“international poll observers have said that voting was largely free and fair despite the irregularities reported by the opposition.”](#)

Comoros is an Indian Ocean state [comprising three semi-autonomous islands](#)- Grande-Comore, Anjouan, and Moheli. It is located north of the Mozambique Channel and was a French colony until 1975. The Comoros archipelago has been vital in the Indian Ocean since the pre-colonial era. It was a crucial node in the maritime trade networks connecting the Middle East, India, and eastern African regions. The islands' strategic location made them an essential stopover for traders and travelers crossing the ocean. As a result, Comoros became a melting pot of cultures, with influences from Africa, Arabia, Persia, and India. Comoros is the member of Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), a leading intergovernmental organization of Indian Ocean region, established in 1997.

The United States and Comoros established diplomatic relations in 1977. The U.S. embassy in Madagascar accredited to Comoros during this time. In February 2023, the two countries signed an agreement known as the U.S.-Comoros Joint Statement on Cooperation. The deal sets shared goals for regional and global peace, prosperity, security, and stability. [Read More](#)

Five Eyes Top Defense Officials Meets

The U.S. Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Indo-Pacific Security Affairs met with his counterparts in Singapore. As per the [readout](#), during the meeting, senior officials discussed ways to

strengthen regional security and uphold the rules-based international order. They emphasized the importance of promoting air and maritime operational safety in the Indo-Pacific region. Furthermore, they reaffirmed the significance of continuing to collaborate in order to enhance the collective resilience of all partners in the region and build resilience across the broader Indo-Pacific area.

Myanmar's Conflict and Security situation: A Conversation with Ambassador Derek Mitchell

On February 1, 2021, a coup d'état took place in Myanmar that saw the military regime take control of the government. This resulted in the arrest of numerous political leaders and civilians, leading to widespread civil unrest and resistance against the military ruler, Min Aung Hlaing. The [resistance alliance](#), made up of three opposition groups, has been escalating their efforts against the military regime and has managed to [gain control of critical areas](#) in Myanmar. The ongoing conflict in Myanmar has been a major concern for regional security, as it has the potential to impact the entire region. The conflict has resulted in a humanitarian crisis, with thousands of people being displaced and facing food and medical shortages.

The international community has condemned the military coup and imposed sanctions on the military regime to pressure them to return power to the democratically elected government. However, the military regime has shown little sign of backing down, and the conflict in Myanmar continues to escalate, with no clear end in sight. On the question of China's role in mediating the conflict and a long-term ally of military regime the former Ambassador of Myanmar Derek Mitchell said, "there's not a lot of trust in between China and Myanmar and even the military regime. They have had a meeting over the years, a kind of a

meeting of interest, but not a lot of trust.” For more details, please see the Vodcast link at Consortium Highlights.

Philippines and Canada sign Defense cooperation Agreement

Philippines and Canada [signed](#) a MOU of defense cooperation. Both countries will cooperate on military education, training exchanges, information sharing, peacekeeping operations, and disaster response. Canada intends to boost its ties with the Philippines and other countries in the region through its Indo-Pacific Strategy. This Strategy seeks to encourage mutual cooperation and benefits, as well as promote regional stability. [Read More](#)

Indo-Pacific Quiz

Which country is Minicoy Island located?

- a. Mauritius
 - b. India
 - c. Maldives
 - d. Sri Lanka
-

Consortium Highlights

- ❖ CIPR Inaugural Vodcast, **INDO-PACIFIC OPTICS**: A conversation with Fmr. Amb. Derek Mitchell on **Myanmar's Ongoing Conflict and Evolving Security Situation**. [Watch Here](#)
 - ❖ CIPR Commentary: **Taiwanese Presidential Election 2024: A Defense Reflection** By: 1st Lt. Grant T. Willis. [Read Here](#).
-

Contributions: Indu Saxena