



Media Release

Tuesday 13 December 2016

UPDATE: Search and Rescue Operation

“Father and son rescued”

Statement to be attributed to Police Commissioner Steve Caldwell, Tonga Police

“I am happy that we can return Sifa and his son Tevita to their loved ones for Christmas.”

Missing ‘Eua man Sifa Pepa (40), and his son Tevita Pepa (14) has been located alive and on their way back home.

Police requested assistance from the RCCNZ (Rescue Co-Ordination Centre New Zealand) for an aerial search by the RNZAF (Royal New Zealand Air Force) P3K2 Orion of the predicted search area.

The P3K2 Orion arrived and conducted the aerial search at around 1:00pm this afternoon Tuesday 13 December. They located the missing boat at approximately 2:00pm at HUNGA TONGA and HMAF VOEA Pangai was deployed at 2:30pm with 2 Police Officers on board to pick them up.

The VOEA Pangai is on its way back to Nuku’alofa with Sifa and his son Tevita. Their family have been advised.

The P3K2 Orion has returned to New Zealand and Commissioner of Police Steve Caldwell wishes to acknowledge the RCCNZ and RNZAF for their assistance in making sure that Sifa and Tevita will be returned home safely to their family. “Their quick and professional response was overwhelming, and I pass on my heartfelt thanks, as well as the familys.”

“We also want to thank HMAF for their valuable assistance, and local fishermen who assisted in the initial sea search. We also appreciate the great work of the MET Office and Coastal Radio.”

Since the launched of the 3 new police SAR boats in December 2015, police have saved 67 lives, from 20 Police SAR operations.

ENDS

Issued by the: *Tonga Police Media & Communication Officer, Tonga Police Headquarters, Longolongo, (676) 23 318, (676) 23 323 Fax: (676) 23 036; for media enquiries – Email: siaadams@police.gov.to or siaadams@gmail.com*



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Police Commissioner Stephen Caldwell emphasizes the importance of taking precautions and safety measures before embarking on their voyages. To make sure that they have a communication means, life jacket, emergency flares and a beacon.

People need to take responsibility for their own safety.

END.

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