

The Foreign Ministers of Latvia and New Zealand discuss global security challenges

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On 11 August 2022, in continuation of his visit to New Zealand, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Edgars Rinkēvičs, met with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of New Zealand, Nanaia Mahuta, and the Minister for Pacific Peoples and *Minister* for Courts, Aupito William Sio.

The Foreign Ministers of Latvia and New Zealand expressed appreciation of the successful cooperation since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1991. The two Ministers voiced hope that the visit would promote a political and economic dialogue. The newly opened Latvian Embassy in Canberra will bring a significant contribution and ensure greater opportunities for Latvia's presence in the Indo-Pacific, Edgars Rinkēvičs noted.

Latvia highly values cooperation with New Zealand as a like-minded partner in regional and international formats. We are bound by common understanding of democracy, human rights, multilateralism, and a rules-based international order, currently endangered by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Edgars Rinkēvičs commended new Zealand's firm stance and sanctions against the aggressor state imposed to date. The Minister called on New Zealand to continue its engagement in support of Ukraine as well as not permitting the crimes perpetrated by Russia go unpunished. Minister Rinkēvičs underlined the need to stand up against disinformation spread by Russia in various regions worldwide.

The officials were in agreement that, in the current geopolitical context, democracies must cooperate, and they welcomed the fact that the relations between Latvia and New Zealand were growing increasingly closer. This is evidenced by the European Union's Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific and the recently concluded negotiations on an EU-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement.

In a conversation with the Minister for Pacific Peoples, views were exchanged on latest developments concerning climate change challenges and their impact on the Pacific Island countries.

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