



PRESS RELEASE

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SEYCHELLES NATIONAL DAY - PIRACY HOSTAGES EXPECTED TO BE RELEASED SOON

Seychelles National Day festivities took place all over the country today as Seychellois celebrated the adoption of multiparty democracy when the Seychelles constitution on 18th June 1993 was approved by 73% of voters in a referendum.

The central celebration activities took place in the National Day Parade of the Seychelles Police and Seychelles Peoples Defense Forces at the Stad Linite, Roche Caiman this afternoon.

This year the Seychelles Forces were joined by the Indian and French Armed Forces, who form part of the Seychelles military partnership for an integrated approach to combating piracy in the region.

During his National Day speech President James Michel congratulated the Police and Seychelles Peoples Defense Forces for the part they played in the negotiations to liberate 7 Seychellois hostages held by Somali pirates, who are expected to be released very soon.

“ Our joy today would have been more powerful if our Seychellois brothers who are being held hostage in Somalia had been with us.... We have succeeded in reaching an agreement to liberate the hostages who were on the Indian Ocean Explorer. They were supposed to be in Seychelles today.

Unfortunately we had have encountered a delay, our negotiation team is in Kenya to finalize the arrangements for their repatriation. I am sure that very soon we will welcome them and share in their joy and happiness. We pray to God they return to us safe and sound,” said President Michel in his address, broadcast live on national radio and television.

All 7 Seychellois hostages onboard the Indian Ocean Explorer are expected to be released, following their 79 day ordeal. They were seized by Somali pirates between 28th-31st March this year.

The President also spoke of the second group of Seychellois hostages held by Somali pirates and said that efforts to gain their release were being increased.

“Our thoughts are with those who were onboard the “Serenity”.

Unfortunately, at the last minute, those who were negotiating on behalf of the pirates broke off their agreement with us. But negotiations are ongoing so that they too can return home as soon as possible,” said President Michel.

During his traditional National Day speech, President James Michel also said that that country needs to reinforce of law and order, ensure a better public service through hard work and professionalism and also to develop a new way to conduct national politics, which made sure the country was not divided on political lines .

President Michel announced that he will soon be introducing an new prison administration system, which will be headed by the Commissioner of Prisons, as well as a new ‘Young Leaders Programme’ for the Police and Defence Forces that will give young officers the chance to gain further specialised training and recognition within the Forces.

President Michel also announced the introduction of a new ‘Special Forces’ unit that will act as a special intervention force in combating piracy, illegal fishing and other threats.