



## **FIJI TRADES UNION CONGRESS**

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**PRESIDENT:** Daniel Urai

**YOUR REF:** .....

**NATIONAL SECRETARY:** Felix Anthony

**OUR REF:** CIR/OUT/02

**DATE:** 04/03/15

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### **PRESS RELEASE**

#### **HUMAN RIGHTS STILL ELUSIVE**

The FTUC rejects the claims by the Prime Minister in his address to 28<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Human Rights Council that his Government had delivered the biggest right of all – the right to equality and justice for all citizens. This is definitely a case of loss in memory on part of the Prime Minister or a deliberate effort to mislead the world.

Fiji has never in its history witnessed serious violations of human rights as it did following the 2006 military coups led by the Prime Minister himself. For the first time in our history we witnessed the murder of soldiers and civilians, the detention, beating and torture of trade union leaders, NGO representatives and citizens who chose to stand up. We witnessed intimidation of citizens all around the country like never before. We witnessed the control on media and still do. We witnessed the rights of workers being taken away. These rights still don't exist. The Prime Minister talk of justice for all is hollow when the perpetrators of beatings, torture, intimidation and murders have still not been made to account for their actions before the law. This Government has given itself absolute immunity for any illegal acts it committed since 2006 and yet tells the world that there is justice for all citizens. We ask, how there is equality for all when the Prime Minister and his lot enjoyed absolute immunity from prosecution. Honesty clearly is not the hallmark of this Government.

This Government talks of equality. Yet it did not allow its citizens to have a say on the Constitution it imposed on the people. It talks of the Bill of Rights in The Constitution portraying the Governments generosity in granting all the rights but tragically omits to talk about the limitations on each of these rights within the same Bill of Rights. These limitations allow for the Decrees that violate workers' rights, human rights and our rights to seek justice denied. All these Decree do not allow for any legal challenge or appeal.

We Remind the Government that the people of Fiji enjoyed substantial rights enshrined in the UN Declaration of Human Rights and the Rights of workers enshrined in the ILO Core Conventions prior to this Government taking office. These rights have now been denied to the people. The ILO Committee of Experts has repeatedly stated that Fiji is in violation of ILO Core Conventions on workers' rights. The Governing Body of ILO listed Fiji as one of the 5 worst violators of Workers' Rights in the world. These are on record.

Fiji is on the ILO Governing Body Agenda to answer for the violations and advise the Governing Body on remedial action to restore those rights. It is time this Government stops believing its own propaganda. The world is not so naïve to believe all is well in Fiji just because we had elections, again through the generosity of the current Prime Minister.

We remind the Prime Minister that Human and Workers Rights are our birth rights and he and his Government have absolutely no right to take them away or restrict them and then claim credit for the little rights that citizens enjoy today or even claim credit for elections. Instead he should answer for all the violations that have taken place and seek forgiveness and reconciliation.

The FTUC calls on the Prime Minister to walk his talk and restore full human and trade Union rights to all the citizens. This can be done by the revocation or repeal of all Decrees that violate any rights and to embark on a public consultation and referendum on a Constitution for Fiji that truly reflects the will of the people. This is a sure way to demonstrate sincerity and a sustainable way forward for Fiji. This would be a louder pronouncement of progress in restoring human rights than just blowing our trumpet out of tune at the UN.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Felix Anthony', with a stylized, cursive script.

**Felix Anthony**  
**National Secretary**

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