

September 1, 2011

Commodore Josai Voreqe Bainimarama
Prime Minister
Republic of Fiji

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Commodore Bainimarmana:

Re: Trade Union Repression in Fiji

On behalf of the **Canadian Union of Public Employees**, I urge you to immediately drop all charges pending against Daniel Urai, President of the Fiji Trade Union Congress (FTUC) and General Secretary of the National Union of Hospitality, Catering and Tourism Industries Employees (NUHCTIE) and his colleague, Mr. Dinesh Goundar, an organiser with NUHCTIE. Both were detained overnight at the Nadi Police Station on August 3, 2011 and charged with unlawful assembly, apparently for having met with union members to prepare for collective bargaining with hotel management. The hearing date is set for tomorrow, September 2, 2011.

The arrest and prosecution of trade unionists for carrying out routine trade union activity is a flagrant violation of fundamental worker rights and must not be allowed to continue. We are also deeply concerned that police broke up a regular meeting of the FTUC on August 13, 2011 after revoking its permit to assemble. Previous applications to hold meetings this year have also been rejected on the basis that the trade union does not support government policy. That trade unions must seek prior consent from the government to hold a union meeting is yet another serious affront to the fundamental human right to freedom of association.

We also understand that the government has issued several executive decrees in 2010-11 which together eliminate fundamental trade union rights in law and practice. The most recent of these decrees, the Essential National Industries (Employment) Decree 2011, requires all unions to reregister under burdensome new rules, abrogate existing collective bargaining agreements and permit strikes only at the discretion of the government. Public sector workers were similarly divested of their rights earlier this year by the Employment Relations Amendment Decree of 2011.

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The international trade union movement sees these acts, under your administration, as profoundly anti-union and anti-democratic. There is no question as to your intention to destroy the trade union movement of Fiji. We will not stand back and allow that to happen. The regime must cease the criminalization of trade union activity and the physical attacks against trade union leaders and must restore the fundamental labor rights recently eliminated by decree.

If you do not, we will have no choice but to escalate our campaign to mobilize the international community to condemn these acts and to advocate for the restoration of trade union and democratic freedoms in Fiji.

Tomorrow's hearing must not go forth.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Moist". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

PAUL MOIST
National President

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cc: Hon Filipe Bole, Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment twaga@labour.gov.fj;
Mr. Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum, Attorney General and Minister for Justice, Anti-Corruption, Public Enterprises, Communications,
Civil Aviation, Tourism, Industry and Trade aiyazsk@gmail.com; Jocelyne Dubois;
Claude Généreux; Pam Beattie; Michael Butler; CUPE National Executive Board; Stan Marshall; Rhonda Spence