



Fiji and the Pacific Island Forum September 2011

The Government of Fiji remains suspended from attending the Pacific Island Forum Leader's meeting as a result of a 2009 decision by Pacific Island Forum nations.

This unanimous decision was made in response to the Fijian Government's failure to constructively address the expectations of Forum leaders' to return Fiji to democratic governance in an acceptable time-frame.

The suspension means that Fiji is prohibited from attending the Pacific Island Forum and is unable to receive development funding from the forum.

Amnesty International takes no position on the form of Government in Fiji. It simply demands that countries uphold their international obligations to respect and protect human rights. Amnesty International also takes no position on the decision to prohibit Fiji from attending the forum but welcomes actions by nations that encourage others to protect and uphold human rights.

The organisation has, however, called on Fiji to cooperate fully with the UN human rights mechanisms, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Pacific Islands Forum and the international community in implementing recommendations for the restoration of the rule of law, the independence of the judiciary and respect for human rights.

Human rights concerns

In April 2009, the President of Fiji, President Ratu Iloilo, abolished the Constitution, sacked the judiciary and declared a state of emergency using the Public Emergency Regulations (PER). The PER greatly restricts freedom of expression and peaceful assembly and the Fijian government continues to use it as a tool of repression.

Ongoing censorship of the media and threats, intimidation and attacks against government critics continue to evoke a climate of fear in Fiji. Amnesty International has documented ongoing human rights violations in Fiji since the military coup d'etat in 2006 and a prevailing culture of impunity amongst members of the security forces. Violations include allegations of torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and punishment.

To address these concerns Amnesty International has consistently recommended that the government of Fiji:

- Ensure the explicit protection of human rights in domestic law, including by reinstating the 1997 Constitution;
- Immediately repeal the Public Emergency Regulations in force since 10 April 2009;
- Ensure the full independence and effective functioning of the Fiji Human Rights Commission;



- Ratify and implement the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its Optional Protocols, the Convention against Torture and its Optional Protocol, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
- Immediately reinstate the judges, magistrates and other judicial officers who were unlawfully removed by President Iloilo on 10 April 2009;
- Immediately halt any undue interference with the independence of the judiciary, including the Fiji Law Society;
- Immediately halt the censorship of the media and allow the people of Fiji and the media the right to freedom of expression, including the right to publish views critical of the government without fear of arrest or other forms of intimidation or punishment;
- Immediately end all violations of human rights by members of the security forces and government officials, including arbitrary arrest, intimidation, threats, assaults and detention of journalists, critics and other members of the public;
- Ensure that all violations of human rights are subject to prompt, effective and impartial investigation and that the suspected perpetrators, including those ordering these acts, are brought to justice in proceedings which meet international standards of fairness and without recourse to the death penalty;
- Ensure that victims of human rights violations are provided with full reparation, including restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition; and
- Put in place a consultative process, including with women's organizations in Fiji, to address violence against women.