



FIJI TRADES UNION CONGRESS

32 DES VOUEX ROAD, P.O. BOX 1418, SUVA, FIJI

PRESIDENT: Daniel Urai

YOUR REF:

NATIONAL SECRETARY: Felix Anthony

OUR REF: PUB/01

DATE: 18/11/11

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The recent arrest of the National President and National Secretary of the Fiji Trades Union Congress is a clear demonstration of the repressive and arbitrary powers that the Public Emergency Regulations (PER) give the Police and others in authority and a clear show of gross abuse of these powers. The arrest and detention of the two most senior leaders in the movement is just another attempt to harass and intimidate Unionists in the country.

In the course of the detention, Mr. Urai was detained at the Nabua Police Station cell while Mr. Anthony was detained at the Central Police Station Cell. Questioning normally over the period of detention was only for short periods while they were just required to sit around and wait. There was absolutely no need for the detention in the first place even if there needed to be questioning conducted which we do not believe there was any need of. There was certainly no need for the 9 days of detention of the National President before charges were laid and 7 days detention for the National Secretary without any charges laid. A clear demonstration of abuse of powers and harassment.

Mr. Urai's charges will be vigorously defended and FTUC stands solidly with Mr. Urai. The International Trade Union movement has pledged its full support as well. The case will be closely monitored around the world. We call on the Regime to withdraw all charges against Mr. Urai and stop the harassment of unionists.

Mr. Anthony since his release has been placed on Travel Restrictions without any advice to him or any reasons given. He was to travel to Singapore this weekend to attend the International Trade Union Confederation Asia Pacific

Regional Council Meeting. On enquiry to the Immigration Department, he has been advised that he will not be allowed to leave the country despite no charges being laid on him or any Court Order that restricts his movements. This arbitrary decision of some individual is again a demonstration of a break down of law and order and an abuse of the processes. This denial is a violation of Mr. Anthony's freedom of movement. This is a clear demonstration by the Regime to stop Mr. Anthony from carrying out his legitimate trade union duties. There is no indication of how long this restriction will continue.

The FTUC calls upon the Regime to show respect for people's rights and not arbitrarily determine guilt of persons without a court process and attempt to punish citizens.

On Wednesday 16th November, Police arrived at the office of an Employer to enquire if Mr. Anthony was conducting a meeting without a permit. Mr. Anthony with his deputy were present at the office to briefly meet the Human Resources Manager on the company's plan to make 115 workers redundant in the coming weeks. Police demanded that Mr. Anthony and Mr. Ruru leave and that no meeting take place. On Thursday 17th November, Mr. Anthony and Mr. Ruru were summoned to the Lautoka Police Station again for a caution statement to be taken over the visit to the Company office. Another demonstration of the Regime's determination to deny legitimate trade union activity and the ability to represent its members, even in such dire circumstances that the members find themselves in.

We hope good sense will prevail, as this is having an impact on the national economy and our standing as a democratic nation on an international level.

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All correspondence to be addressed to the National Secretary

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