



FIJI TRADES UNION CONGRESS

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NATIONAL SECRETARY: Felix Anthony

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Launch of the International Trade Union Confederation

Annual Survey of Violations of Trade Union Rights

The 2012 edition of the ITUC's Annual Survey, covering the period January to December 2011 has been officially launched on the 6th of June. The Annual Survey was then presented on the 6th of June in a special event at 13.30 in Geneva during the International Labour Conference where Fiji's Tripartite Delegation is participating.

The Global publication of the Annual Survey is the primary ITUC tool to expose and denounce violations of workers' rights, wherever they occur.

During the review period, immense changes have taken place in the area of human rights in Fiji. As a member of the international body we are obliged to report any breach of workers' and human rights in Fiji. Amongst the documented and reported violations, there has been 1 threat case, 4 cases of injuries, 5 cases of arrests and 2 dismissal cases.

Below is an excerpt from the full report which has been published: For full report please see:
<http://survey.ituc-csi.org/Fiji.html?lang=en#tabs-1>

Introduction:

The Fijian government, led by a military junta since a 2006 coup d'etat, launched an aggressive campaign in 2011 to dismantle the trade union movement by use of brute force, by jailing trade union

leaders and by issuing executive decrees that together have deprived most Fijian workers of their fundamental international labour rights.

Violations

Fiji's top trade union leader subjected to beatings and threats:

Felix Anthony, National Secretary of the Fiji Trades Union Congress (FTUC) and General Secretary of the Fiji Sugar and General Workers' Union (FSGWU), was arrested, threatened, insulted and beaten up several times by government agents.

On the evening of 12 February, three military officers took him from his home to military barracks in Lautoka, before taking him back home. During the transfer officers threatened him and his family.

On 18 February, Felix Anthony was told the Prime Minister wanted to meet him at a sugar mill in Ba, in Western Fiji. He attended the meeting with two other trade union leaders, including the president of the Ba branch of the FSGWU. Following the meeting the three union officials were beaten by army officers. Mr. Anthony's eardrum was damaged as a result of the beating and the two other trade union leaders also needed medical attention. They were released that evening under threat of further violence. On 1 April, Felix Anthony was again threatened by one of the military officers who had already given him a beating.

When the FTUC nominated Mr. Anthony to participate in the 100th session of the International Labour Conference in June in Geneva, the government failed to submit his credentials (he was finally able to participate thanks to the help of the ITUC). On 4 November, he was again held in police custody (without charge) while the police searched his union's offices and his home.

Felix Anthony was prohibited from travelling abroad in the last few months of the year, without any justification by the regime. He lodged a complaint against the government because of the ban, but the clerk of court refused to register it.

FTUC President arrested twice on baseless charges: On 3 August, Mr Daniel Urai, President of the Fiji Trades Union Congress (FTUC) and General Secretary of the National Union of Hospitality, Catering and Tourism Industries Employees (NUHCTIE), and Nitin Goundar, an organiser with NUHCTIE, were detained and questioned at the Nadi Police Station, apparently for having met with union members regarding pending collective negotiations. They were released on bail on 4 August. On 29 October, Mr Urai was arrested again, this time at the airport upon his return from the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Perth, Australia, where he spoke out against human and trade union rights violations perpetrated by the Fijian government. He was again released on bail, but was accused of "inciting political violence by urging to overthrow the government". Mr. Urai is subject to a curfew that restricts his freedom of movement in the country. By the end of the year the case concerning the two charges against him had still not been heard.

Freedom of Association Committee again calls for the reinstatement of Mr. Koroi : In November, the [ILO](#) Committee on [Freedom of Association](#) again recommended to the government that Mr. Koroi be reinstated immediately to his previous role as principal, with no loss of salary or benefits. Tevita Koroi, President of the Fijian Teachers' Association (FTA) and a member of the Council of Pacific Education, was fired from the public service on 30 April 2009. On 10 December 2008, the Fiji Public Service Commission had informed Tevita Koroi that he was suspended from his position as principal. The Commission criticised Mr. Koroi for speaking out publicly against the military coup. (see the 2011 edition of the Survey).

Government refuses entry to international union delegation : On 13 December, an international trade union delegation, led by ACTU Australia President Ged Kearney, was refused permission to enter the country on arrival at Nadi airport and deported. Delegation members' mobile phones were confiscated until their departure. The delegation had planned to meet Prime Minister Bainimarama to seek a fresh dialogue on human and labour rights in Fiji.

GSP Pressure : In December 2011, the AFL-CIO submitted a country practice petition to the US Trade Representative urging that Fiji be withdrawn from the list of countries benefitting from the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) until the government respected the conditions regarding internationally recognised workers' rights.

We request the Fiji media to follow up on this international report and the Publication of this Survey and bring it to the attention of the Fiji public.

For full report please see: <http://survey.ituc-csi.org/Fiji.html?lang=en#tabs-1>

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