



FIJI TRADES UNION CONGRESS

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RADIO TARANA

The latest Radio Tarana news item in their broadcast alluded to Prime Minister that I have withdrawn my police statement against him calls for a reality check. The fact is that I have neither withdrawn nor changed my statement given to the Police in Lautoka on 19th February, 2011. I stand by the statement I gave to the Police which states that PM Bainimarama abused and threatened me at Rarawai Mill in Ba on 18th February, 2012 and later, my two union colleagues and I was assaulted by the Military personnel in Ba and later at Nadi RFMF Western Command Centre.

The current mischief-making by some media locally and by Radio Tarana abroad is part of the regime's strategy to sweep the human rights abuse under the carpet. Tarana is NZ based Hindi Radio Station which is a well-known and vocal sympathiser of the regime and has been complimenting and mouthing Sharon Smith-Johns' agenda of twisting facts and propagating misinformation in all matters against the backdrop of a gagged media in Fiji.

The assault by the military; my statement to the police and the medical reports which I have in my possession cannot be denied whatever the tactics the regime may conjure and employ to divert and misrepresent facts. These reports will be given to the appropriate authorities and not Sharon Smith-Johns.

I reiterate the facts of the matter as follows:

- On 18th Feb; 2011 I was abused and threatened by PM Bainimarama followed by assaults from the Military Officers; first in Ba and later in Nadi.
- On 19th Feb; 2011 I was examined by a Filipino doctor at the Lautoka Hospital. Later my G.P. examined me and referred me to the CWM Hospital in Suva for my ear drum to be re-examined for a second opinion. I am in possession medical reports relating to the injuries I received. However, my first examining doctor's report on 19/02/11 is not being released by the medical professionals at Lautoka Hospital on the pretext that they are unable to decipher the handwriting of the examining doctor who is now in private practice. An excuse which reeks of a feeble attempt by the fearful and compliant functionaries of the regime.
- In between the period Feb 2011 and June 2011 I was threatened several times by the military not to oppose the regime. I have been arrested or forced to the police station a number of times and put in jail for a week in November for no reason.
- After the above mentioned incident and a few others I decided to file a report with the Lautoka Police Station on 13th June, 2012 giving various details beginning with the assault on 18th February, 2011.

There is a record of numerous letters of protest and emails sent to the PM calling for a full investigation in this matter which included international agencies, such as the ILO and the trade union National Centres of Australia and NZ. All these protests and calls simply fell on deaf ears.

In December 2011, the ILO Asia/Pacific and Arab Regional Conference in Kyoto, Japan unanimously adopted a Resolution raising concerns at the beating of two (2) trade unionists and the National Secretary of FTUC. The resolutions also called on the regime to uplift the travel ban put against me and restore trade union and workers' rights. The Kyoto Tripartite meeting was attended by the Governments, Employers and Workers organisations from the region. This Resolution has been acknowledged by the regime without disputing the facts.

We are at a loss to understand what more the regime requires to address an extremely important question of personal safety, freedom of speech, movement and a bigger question of individual human rights. The least they can do is to stop misleading the Fiji public and the international community. I am awaiting investigation by the police and a progress in the matter so that truth once again does not fall victim as, it invariably happens under the regime's oft repeated rhetoric of everyone is equal under the eyes of the law.

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