



## FIJI TRADES UNION CONGRESS

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#### **Civil Service Restructure – A Massive Failure**

The PM's derogatory statement of civil servants is misconceived and uncalled for. The Prime Minister cannot blame civil servants for his government's failures and misconceived policies imposed to restructure the service. The decision to open various government service centers throughout Fiji is not only another waste of both manpower and financial resources but is only a political gimmick. There is absolutely no logic in the opening of such centers when Government Departments are all available in the various districts and there are officers there to provide services. The officers who would be manning these centers will not have the expertise in dealing with all types of queries and will eventually have to refer the people to the respective ministries and departments. This is duplicity of services and probably another scheme to provide jobs to family and friends.

There was exorbitant spending authorized by the Permanent Secretary of the Public Service Commission, Parmesh Chand on the Public Service Excellence Awards just recently where many public officers were rewarded for their excellent service delivery. If this was true, then the comments by the Prime Minister, Commodore Voreqe Bainimarama are out of kilter and make no sense. The derogatory remarks against the civil servants are most unfair and we condemn it. Civil servants have worked hard in face of many difficulties, many of which were created by this government. The Prime Minister's statement is simply an admission that the systems and processes put in place by PSC is ineffective despite the rosy picture often painted by the PS, PSC in the news media.

The PM instead of opening these "Service Centers" should eradicate corruption which is rife in the upper echelons of the civil service. The Prime Minister would do well to admit the fact that inexperienced and unqualified people have been appointed to lead the civil service. All principles of fair play, transparency, accountability in the appointment, promotion and observance of MQRs etc in the Public Service is now non-existent, and new individual contracts imposed are for limited terms create job insecurity. Serving career officers at all ranks remain in limbo regarding their future prospects and the overall morale is severely affected.

The General Orders (GO's) in Civil Service has served well for many years, as it sets out Policies, Procedures and Regulations in the public service. However, the unilateral amendment of General Orders by this government legalises nepotism and allows for the appointment of a Minister's wife, son, daughter, father, mother, brother or sister, family and friends to be easily appointed with only a recommendation or an order to the Public Service Commission.

The Fiji public service is militarized all around particularly at managerial levels of the service such as Permanent Secretaries, Divisional Commissioners, Directors and Heads of Departments. These are the people who ought to take responsibility for the mess as well. The morale in the civil service is at its lowest ebb as the workers are under the command of senior military officers or personal appointees of the Attorney-General, Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum who are parading as Permanent Secretaries and dish out orders in breach of normal civil service rules and regulations.

Appointments are made to the PS positions without any form of transparency and accountability and this is subsequently reflected on the general performance of the individual Ministries and Departments. It is time for government to understand that the current policy in the civil service is a failure and it is time to change course now rather than blaming workers. Stripping civil servants of their fundamental rights, such as right to collective bargaining, fair redress to

grievances and disputes, reduction of entitlements, job insecurity, intimidation etc will not create an efficient and productive workforce.

It is time for the Prime Minister to admit failures and restore workers their rights and also understand that the military officers were never intended to manage the civil service, ever. Government must take full responsibility for the state of our civil service and now do the right thing.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Felix Anthony', is centered on the page. The signature is fluid and cursive.

**Felix Anthony**  
**National Secretary**

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