



FIJI TRADES UNION CONGRESS

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PRESS RELEASE (6) ON DECREE NO. 35 OF 2011

Government yesterday gazetted Decree No. 35 of 2011 which attempts to totally decimate the Trade Union Movement. This Decree takes workers of Fiji back to pre 1938 when workers agitated for the formation of Trade Unions in Fiji and were able to form Unions to protect their interest and gain some dignity at work. With a stroke of a pen, this Government has gone into record as totally stripping off the gains of almost 8 decades of struggle of workers of Fiji.

This Government had through the "*Peoples Charter*" committed to make progress by ensuring to uphold the "*principles of equality and dignity of all citizens, a just and fair society, transparent and accountable government, social and economic justice*" to name a few. What we have seen so far is to the contrary. Stripping workers of their rights and dignity is no progress. **A sad day for Fiji.**

The decree takes away workers and their Unions' right to collectively bargain, defend workers' rights and to promote dignity at work through the ILO Decent Work Programme which Fiji has committed to. This Decree blatantly violates all ILO Core Conventions, the Cotonou Agreement (ACP-EU), and Agreement between Employers, Unions, Government and the ILO on the promotion of decent work in Fiji. No responsible Government would do this.

The Attorney General had accused the FTUC of misleading the International Community and had actually denied that any such draft legislation existed when FTUC raised concern internationally of Government's intentions to decimate the trade union movement. Now we have the truth before us. We ask, is this the transparent and accountable Government the people of Fiji were promised? Trade Unions in Fiji have demonstrated their desire to work for **the better good** of all workers in Fiji and had engaged with Government to achieve this. Unfortunately, Government has lacked the sincerity, commitment and desire to engage constructively.

An initial assessment of the Decree has been carried out and is attached as a Fact Sheet.

The FTUC has attempted to call a National Council Meeting to discuss this matter in the immediate future.

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NATIONAL SECRETARY

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