



FIJI TRADES UNION CONGRESS

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FTUC Supports Sugar Workers

The statements attributed to Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum threatening the Sugar Workers serve only to provoke the workers into taking actions that they have now legitimately decided on, despite threats and intimidation from the military, Police and Management of the FSC. The action taken by the workers is legitimate and is within the confines of the laws of Fiji. The FSC has not acted within the law or the intent of the law in its blatant refusal to negotiate with the Union. Yet, the A-G has the audacity to talk about the 200,000 people who could be affected by the strike and the poor state of the industry while he is not prepared to do anything constructive to encourage the FSC to resolve the matter. He is effectively condoning the irresponsible behavior of the FSC Management. It is time that the Regime takes some responsibility for the current impasse. The people of Fiji are aware and are not so gullible to chastise workers in their just struggle for a decent living.

These workers have not received benefits in overtime payments and allowances due to them under their Collective Agreement and the law since 2009. They have sacrificed their time and money towards the development of the Sugar Industry without recognition of their contribution from the Regime.

It is a sad indictment on the Regime where the workers' real wage is allowed to decline by more than 40 percent forcing workers into extreme poverty. The fact is

that most workers in this country have had their wages and salaries declined by more than 40 percent since 2006 and the Regime seems to be oblivious to this fact and its effect on families. It is time the Regime faces up to its responsibilities and seriously addresses the concerns of workers and their families as they have struggled over the years since the events of December 2006. The current situation is a direct consequence of this Regime's actions since December 2006 and is untenable.

Workers deserve recognition from this Regime in the development of the Sugar Industry and indeed in all other industries in this country. Workers create the wealth and sustain the economy despite the hardship, intimidation and the bullying by the authorities and they deserve better.

The FTUC fully supports the sugar workers and the FSGWU in their struggle to just wage increases for the workers and their families. It is time to give credit where it is due.



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