



FIJI TRADES UNION CONGRESS

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ILO Ultimatum

The Governing Body of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) once again has stressed that the Government of Fiji must without delay address the very serious violations of workers fundamental rights. The Governing Body has resolved to urge the Fiji Government once again to accept the Direct Contacts Mission to Fiji on the original terms of reference in good time for the Mission to be able to report in the next Governing Body in November. It further resolved that should the Mission not take place, the next Governing Body should appoint a Commission of Inquiry.

All speakers from Employers, Workers and Governments sectors in attendance agreed that the situation in Fiji in relation to workers' rights and fundamental freedoms were very serious. Many recalled that the ILO had made several requests after the last mission was expelled. Clearly patience amongst members has been severely tested and members are no longer prepared to put up with this situation.

Representatives of the Fiji Government unsuccessfully sought to defer any consideration of a Commission of Inquiry.

The violations of workers' fundamental rights have put Fiji on the International agenda and received condemnation from all participants. This state of affairs does no good to Fiji's standing and reputation internationally. The Prime Minister is calling on the Fijian people to support him on his record for delivering services to the people. The ILO Committee of Experts has stated that the PM's record relating to the treatment of workers in the country is not good. He has stripped workers of all their rights and dignity at work and rendered them vulnerable to exploitation and bullying by their employers. He has torn their Collective Agreements up and put them back 50 years. Is this the record he is referring to? The workers of Fiji know who to vote for when the time comes.

The GB was reminded of the Decrees, the denial of political rights to Trade Unionists and the restrictions on freedom of speech with a media that is seriously compromised. The Governing Body was also reminded of the recent arrest of Mr. Daniel Urai and other Union officials.

The decision of the Governing Body is a clear signal to the people of Fiji that the world does not tolerate such dictatorship and contempt for workers' rights and their Unions. The FTUC calls upon the Government to take heed of the decision and act to do the right thing. Any Government that brings such disrepute to the Country does not deserve to govern.

The Fiji Government was represented by the Minister for Labour, Jone Usamate, his Permanent Secretary, a representative from the Solicitor General's office and Nazhat Shameem. FTUC National Secretary, Felix Anthony attended the meet on behalf of the Workers.



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