



RELEASE BY RATU TEVITA MARA: FIJI REGIME'S PROMISE OF AN ELECTION IN 2014

Dear citizens and friends of Fiji

The regime promised an election in 2014. The alleged Attorney General stated in an interview that anyone will be allowed to stand, except those in jail.

In the past, the regime stated that it wishes to eliminate the former communal voting system before an election is held. It previously committed to commencing a review before the close of 2012. With this promise the regime seeks to fend off international criticism and to persuade the international community to tolerate its grip on power until elections are held. The promise appears to be a key element in the regime's strategy and has been much touted by its Information (or rather, Misinformation) Ministry. The promise has also attracted sympathetic comment from some Australian commentators.

So it is very important to examine the credibility of the promise.

The first point is that the promise has no greater credibility than that previously made for an election in 2009. That 2009 promise comprised a deliberate lie on the part of the regime, by which, unfortunately, too many people believed. Having dishonoured that promise, the dictator did not even have the intestinal fortitude to confront Prime Ministers of other states to explain his decision; instead, he sent the alleged Attorney General, to whom no doubt the Prime Ministers expressed their sentiments with regard to the betrayal.

The second point is that the Constitutional changes, which the dictator has always insisted upon to overcome the problem of communal voting, could be made at any time, and could have been made at any time since the end of 2006, not literally at the stroke of a pen, but certainly in a very short space of time. The objectionable provisions in fact only cover one page or so of the current Constitution. The suggestion that immense research would be needed before such changes can be made is an illusion. In any event, almost five years have elapsed since the latest coup, giving ample time for the changes to be made.

The insincerity of the regime in regard to making of necessary changes is shown by its "commitment" to commencing a revision process in late 2012. Had the regime been sincere, the process could have been started much earlier.

If the regime pleads that it is necessary to have widespread consultations before relevant amendments can be made, why have not the Public Emergency Regulations been lifted to allow that process?

Third point, but even more important, is the fact that the regime is inherently incapable of holding a free and fair election - not now, nor ever.



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A free and fair election would be one under which prior to the election the Army genuinely and permanently retires to barracks and ceases to exert influence on public affairs, in which a civilian interim Government controls the conduct of the election, and in which there is freedom of speech and assembly.

The regime will never hold a free and fair election.

The holding of a free and fair election would mean that after the election a genuinely independent civilian government would exist, and in which the Army would have retired to barracks.

A genuinely independent civilian government would hold the dictator and the alleged Attorney General guilty for their multiple crimes.

For an indication as to what crimes are spoken of, one need only advert to the reports of Amnesty International on Fiji since the current regime took power.

There are also existing crimes committed by the dictator even before the take over.

For every beating, killing, rape and assault by the Army since the coup, the dictator and the alleged Attorney General must take responsibility. Likewise he and the alleged Attorney General must take responsibility for all acts of corruption committed by them or with their knowledge since the coup.

The dictator and the alleged Attorney General simply dare not and will not hold a free and fair election. The consequences for them would be too drastic. In the meantime they have come up with this false promise to buy time while they continue to suppress the people, amass wealth and amass power.



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The Attorney General has said that anyone will be able to stand in the promised election except those in prison. But he is in a unique position to put anyone into prison at the drop of a hat.

Some time ago, in Military Council, the alleged Attorney General made statements quite at variance with the lies which he tells now. He put forward a strategy of prosecuting political leaders who might not be expected to support the regime, and to drag out the prosecutions so as to incapacitate them from participating in any election. This is exactly what the regime has done. Since the law is what the alleged Attorney General says it is, as backed by military force, this dirty trick can be used to keep out of any election those who would not support the regime.

Certainly, the regime may hold an election but not a free and fair election,. In such an election its quizlings and puppets would no doubt stand, and the Army continue to dominate civilian affairs.

The regime cannot hold a free and fair election- not now, not ever. The promise of an election should be seen for what it is- a naked lie to conceal the truth.

May God bless Fiji