

Geneva, 3rd May 2019

Hon. Josaia V. Bainimarama
Prime Minister, Republic of Fiji
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IndustriALL Global Union calls on Government of Fiji to release National Secretary of FTUC and union members of NUW

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

I am writing this letter to you on behalf of [IndustriALL Global Union](http://www.industriall-union.org), which represents more than fifty million workers in mining, energy and manufacturing industries throughout the world, including Fiji, to express our serious concern about the arrest of Mr. Felix Anthony, National Secretary of the Fiji Trade Union Congress (FTUC) as well as 29 members of the National Union of Workers (NUW), who are employees of the Water Authority of Fiji, along with 1 union staff, on 1st May.

IndustriALL Global Union is extremely shocked to know that Mr. Anthony was arrested on 1st May at 4.20 pm from the Ministry of Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations Conference Room in Suva during a tripartite meeting, witnessed by representatives of government, employers and ILO officials. Mr. Anthony, who is the President of the ITUC-AP, is currently being held in custody at the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) in Suva and accused of breaching the Public Order Act. Uncannily, the arrest came ahead of planned nationwide union events on 3 and 4 May, and Mr. Anthony was also supposed to represent the workers of the NUW in a tribunal hearing of the Water Authority case yesterday.

FTUC workers and members continue to be intimidated. The police are stationed out in numbers of the roads on both sides of the FTUC building as well in the tent where the workers had gathered.

Freedom of Association is one of the primary safeguards of peace and social justice. Workers have the right to express their views and defend their interest, including through peaceful demonstration, in an atmosphere free of fear, coercion, repression and violence. The arrest and detention, even if only briefly, of trade union leaders or union members for trade union activities is contrary to the principle of freedom of association. Fiji, as an ILO Member State, has committed to respect, promote and realise the fundamental principles and rights at work. Moreover, by ratifying in 2002 the ILO Convention 87 on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise, Fiji explicitly accepted an international legal obligation to respect the principles enshrined in the convention.

Therefore, IndustriALL Global Union calls for your immediate intervention to:

- Drop all charges against Mr. Felix Anthony and the 29 NUW union members, along with 1 union staff, and release them unconditionally;
- To stop repressing union leaders and union members on account of their legitimate right to express their views and defend their interests; and

- To engage in good faith negotiations with the FTUC leadership to agree on a peaceful and constructive way out of the current crisis at the Water Authority.

I anticipate your swift action and quick reply.

Yours sincerely,



Valter Sanches
General Secretary