



International Transport Workers Federation



IndustriALL Global Union

Commodore Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama
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DC/sk/daw

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Dear Prime Minister

We are writing to you on behalf of IndustriALL-Global Union, representing 50 million members in 400 trade unions in over 140 countries, and the International Transport Workers' Federation, representing 716 trade unions in 154 countries and 4.5 million members.

Our concerns relate to the recent hearings by the United States Trade Representative held on 2 October 2012 and the potential removal of Fiji from the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP). The GSP provides a vitally important tariff reduction on certain goods from Fiji into the United States.

The manufacturing sector plays a vital role in the Fijian economy in terms of employment and wealth generation in many industries including sugar and textiles. Our local unions represent many of the workers in these sectors.

Over the past 2 years trade union rights have been systematically undermined by the series of decrees implemented by your government and designed to de-unionise strategic industries and provide obstacles to the continued existence of a free trade union movement. Furthermore, representatives of our affiliated unions have been physically beaten, arrested and detained without cause, unjustifiably charged with serious crimes and subjected to harassment in the usual course of their day-to-day work representing manufacturing workers.

The international trade union movement has written to you numerous times on these issues and received no response. Trade union and International Labour Organisation (ILO) delegations have been denied entry to your country. It is very clear to the international community that up until now you have not been interested in protecting the interests of the working people of the Fiji Islands.

The GSP decision will have a severe impact on the Fijian economy. Over 20 per cent of Fiji's gross domestic product is generated by industry, in particular exports to important trading partners such as the United States. We believe that Fiji's other trading partners are following this situation closely and may themselves explore similar measures.

The potential impact of the decision on the job security of the 335,000 workers that make up the Fijian labour force and in particular the 20 per cent that rely on the industrial sector is too high a price to pay for the unwillingness of your regime to respect fundamental human and trade union rights.

We urge you to prioritise the interests of Fijian workers and trade unions and take the necessary steps to comply with the standards expected in the GSP programme and so secure the jobs and economic benefits of a strong industrial base in Fiji for the future.

We further urge your government to fully restore to Fijian workers the rights enshrined in the Employment Relations Promulgation 2007, to withdraw the decrees that undermine these labour rights and to drop all charges against Fijian trade unionists incurred in the course of their business representing Fijian workers.

Yours sincerely



David Cockroft
General Secretary
International Transport Workers' Federation



Jyrki Raina
General Secretary
IndustriALL Global Union