

TRAVEL ADVISORY FOR THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI

AUSTRALIANS CAN HELP STOP THE VIOLENCE IN FIJI

More than half of all holidaymakers heading to Fiji each year are Australian, that is around 318,000 each year. Over half of the people on those routes are flying on Air Pacific – an airline company owned 51 per cent by the Fijian people, but controlled by Fiji's military dictatorship, as well as a 46 per cent share owned by the Qantas Group.

Tourism dollars are now propping up a junta who has ruled by decree.

QANTAS STANDS FIRM ON FIJI DISPUTE

Fiji union leader arrested

Unionist charged with unlawful assembly

Junta link puts Qantas Fiji flights under cloud

Union Bashing in Fiji Picks up Pace as Public Sector Workers' Sub Scrapped

Fiji decree may spark union action at Qantas

WHAT CAN QANTAS DO?

Given the Qantas group's interest in Air Pacific, as well as it's putting Qantas/Jetstar passengers on its flights, Qantas can make a difference to the people of Fiji by standing up to this dictatorship. They can start this by defending their employees. By doing this, it has the power to create a positive outcome for hundreds, if not thousands of families.

WHAT'S HAPPENING TO UNION MEMBERS IN FIJI?

“ Qantas management needs to stand up for human rights and ensure ILO [International Labour Organisation] conventions are met.”

Tony Sheldon

Transport Workers' Union of Australia

“ Under the emergency decree, if there is a meeting of two or more people we need a permit. It is a risk being in the union. You need to apply for a permit seven days for a permit to hold the meeting. But it can take three or four months and you hear nothing, which makes having seminars impossible. The military sits in on the meeting and may record it. The meeting will also have a time limit.”

Attar Singh

Fiji Islands Trade Union Council

“ After months of stalling, the Fijian airline has told its flight attendants they want overtime rates of pay removed along with long-service leave. At the same time, Air Pacific wants to significantly reduce annual leave and sick leave entitlements, while also removing the appeal process and representation in the workplace.”

Jo Ann Davidson

Flight Attendants Association of Australia

“ We have been told that five engineers have left Fiji and gone to Papua New Guinea where the pay is better due to the demand for fly-in/fly-out work at the mines. To fill up the short-fall, they brought back 70 and 75 year old retirees and fast-tracked certifications for others. Given Air Pacific flies what is reportedly the world's oldest operating 747 on the Australian route, this is a major concern and something you would want CASA looking into.”

Steve Purvinas

Australian Licensed Aircraft Engineers Associaton

“ The workforce agreed to a 10 per cent pay reduction for three months in 2009, so we can't be accused of being unreasonable. Since August 2006, workers have not received any pay increases, we cannot go backwards here.”

Kamlesh Kumar,

Transport Workers Union of Fiji

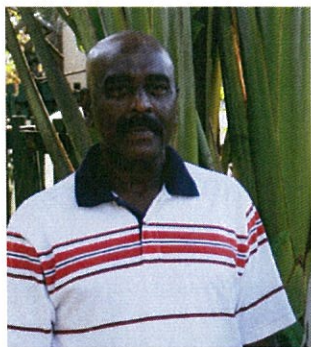
“ Just last Friday (week) we've had the government make an announcement that it was going to withdraw the deduction of union subscriptions from public sector workers. This is a clear indication to us that the government continues its efforts to try and weaken unions in Fiji and... to decimate them altogether.”

Felix Anthony

Fiji Trade Union Council

And there's a lot to be worried about. As the acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, Martin Ferguson, notes: "Since 2006 the Bainimarama regime has abrogated the constitution; detained political leaders; sacked the independent judiciary; censored the media; and restricted meeting of civil society, including church groups."

KHALIF MOHAMAED BASHED BY THE ARMY



KHALIF MOHAMAED, (a transport worker and president of the Fiji Sugar and General Workers Union, was assaulted by the army on February 18 and June 22, 2011)

"The man who came to speak to me from the military was wearing the full military uniform. The beating was to punish me but also to get information on the activity of the Union. This time the interrogating soldier was a private, and while I was being questioned, he was giving me punches to the back and slapping me in the back of the head. He accused me of swearing and then slurred my mother. He then laid me out on the floor and pushed me into the ground and punched my head.

Eventually, I left but I live about 1/2 a mile from work, and walked home. I was sore and my phone rang a couple of times. It was the Manager calling me back. The Army said if I didn't go back and they had to come and get me my family would be in trouble. I went back and there were soldiers there. They started bashing me again. I was pushed to the ground and kicked in the legs, I was punched in the stomach and was thrown into a puddle, as it had rained. The puddle was dirty with ash and oil and dust, I was punched and kicked again and told to roll over. They pushed my face into the water until I could no longer breathe.

I was made to sit in the water in front of all the staff with the army asking me questions.

A corporal was questioning me and I was still being hit. They were asking me why I was still in the union, and why I had not resigned. They said I was told to resign from the Union at the first bashing in February, but I did not know that. They wanted to know about meetings with delegates and accused me of holding secret meetings. I was kicked and punched again, and the said "If you go on with the union, we will kill you".

The Military said that they would take me to the prime minister (Frank Bainimarama) in Suva and he would beat me. I had to write down the names of all the delegates and said if they found out I had a meeting, they would kill me. I was told to be at work at 3pm the next day and to have a resignation letter together to resign from the union.

I have had kidney pain from being kicked in the side, but I could not get a private doctor to treat me. The Doctors would not help me because they are scared of the military. In the end, I told one I fell in a field and he helped me."