

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

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ITUC Condemns Fiji Coup

Brussels, 5 December 2006 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC has condemned today's military coup in Fiji, as an "affront to democracy and human rights". This is the fourth coup in the Pacific Island country since 1987. After several days of steady tightening of pressure, Fiji's military chief Commodore Frank Bainimarama announced to the country that he had dismissed Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase and installed retired doctor and Medical Association President Jona Senilagakali as caretaker Prime Minister.

Demanding an immediate return to democracy, ITUC General Secretary Guy Ryder said "Once again, Fiji is being thrown into turmoil, with grave consequences not only for democracy and the rule of law, but also for the country's economy". Governments around the world have condemned the military's actions, with Australia and New Zealand already announcing sanctions targeted at senior military officers. With travel warnings already issued by several countries, the impact on Fiji's tourist industry, a mainstay of the national economy, is likely to be severe. The government of New Zealand has also threatened to seek Fiji's expulsion from the Commonwealth group of countries.

President Ratu Josefa Iloilo, initially believed to have given a green light to the coup plotters, has now publicly stated that he neither condones nor supports the military's actions.

Founded on November 1 2006, the ITUC represents 168 million workers in 153 countries and territories and has 304 national affiliates. <http://www.ituc-csi.org>

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