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MEDIA RELEASE

NFP WILL BE AN EFFECTIVE OPPOSITION

After almost 8 years of military rule, democracy has returned to Fiji.

The people of Fiji have spoken through the ballot box, notwithstanding irregularities in polling that we as a party have complained about via our letter of last Friday, providing evidence to this effect, which is just a small sample of irregularities, reports of which will be compiled and sent to the Electoral Commission seeking clarification.

Nevertheless, people of Fiji have elected a government for the next four years. We respect the verdict of the people and wish Mr Voreqe Bainimarama and his government well for the next four years. We expect nothing short of a transparent and accountable government and we will hold the new government to this principle.

We also wish SODELPA and its leader Marama Bale Roko Tui Dreketi Ro Teimumu Kepa well in parliament for the next 4 years.

As a party the NFP fought the general elections on issues. Team NFP had men and women of integrity, honesty, and qualified to serve the people of Fiji. We did not campaign along racial and religious lines. Above all, our campaign was not based on lies and deceit.

We thank our members, supporters and well wishers for placing their trust in us. We did not win any seats in the 1999 and 2006 general elections. We won a seat in the 2001 elections and our Member of Parliament, the then Opposition Leader lost his seat controversially after a court challenge by our opponents.

Therefore it is a matter of some pride that the NFP is back in Parliament with 3 seats. Every party contests the elections to form government and the NFP was no exception. But we are pleased that a party written off by many, has performed creditably and won three seats, largely through the efforts of Team NFP. Despite massive electoral setbacks in the last 3 general elections, the NFP survived as a party because of its principles, objectives and a never-say-die spirit of our supporters. We applaud them and promise not to shirk the principles of our founding leaders, which has been part of our DNA for the last 51 years.

The NFP will be an effective opposition party in parliament. We will work with all Members of Parliament including those from Government benches to ensure that the

All correspondence should be addressed to the general secretary

Headquarters : 124 Princes Road, Tamavua, Suva, Fiji Islands
P.O. Box 4399 Samabula, Fiji Islands

Telephone : (679) 338 5916
Facsimile : (679) 338 1991

Email: nfp@nfpfiji.com
Website: www.nfpfiji.com

Parliament becomes an effective debating chamber on important issues affecting the people of Fiji.

Parliament is the highest court of the land and the parliamentary floor is a firm foundation to address issues confronting our people. We will do so in an open and transparent manner. We will criticize government's policies not just for the sake of doing so, but provide credible alternatives. And at the end of four years, we will once again appear before the people of Fiji and be judged on whether or not we have performed effectively as a party, both in and outside of parliament.

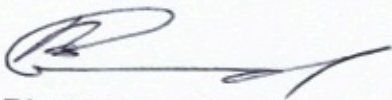
While the result is not what we expected, we are still happy that Team NFP's 49 candidates have secured 3 seats. Our Madam President is the 2nd highest vote getter amongst women candidates behind SODELPA Leader Marama Bale Roko Tui Dreketi Ro Teimumu Kepa. The NFP Leader received the 4th highest number of votes. And a party that has been out of Parliament for 15 years has 3 seats. This is no mean feat.

We thank all the people of Fiji for participating in the general election and turning out in large numbers to exercise their right. We acknowledge the hard work of the Electoral Commission, the Supervisor of Elections and all staff of the Elections Office, including members of the public recruited to work as polling day workers and presiding officers.

We also acknowledge the support of the international community in ensuring through diplomacy that elections would be held as promised and their financial contribution towards the elections.

We thank the media organisations and individual journalists for working very hard under difficult circumstances, in allowing voters to make informed choices in the election.

As a party born out of the struggle for equality, dignity and justice of all our people, the NFP has reclaimed its place rightful place in Parliament. 3 seats may be a small step but a giant stride for us. There can be no doubt whatsoever about this.



Biman Prasad
Leader