

## **NFP President describes MP's interrogation as**

### **Persecution and intimidation**

The National Federation claims that the interrogation of NFP Member of Parliament Parmod Chand by police for allegedly making seditious statements is political persecution, harassment and intimidation by the Fiji Police Force on the orders from Government.

NFP President Pio Tikoduadua says this is clear from the threat made against Mr Chand in Parliament by the Attorney General Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum on September 14<sup>th</sup> this year.

Mr Tikoduadua pointed out that while speaking during a debate on a Motion to thank His Excellency the President for his address, Mr Sayed-Khaiyum while talking on practices in the 2006 general elections said following interjections by Opposition Members, "Hon Chand, you know this! You know very much about this. I have a statutory declaration here about you my friend, which I will reveal later on."

"This confirms that Government orchestrated this act of intimidation and persecution that resulted in a team of detectives from CID headquarters in Suva taking Mr Chand into custody on Friday at the Labasa Police Station and interrogating him over the contents of a statutory declaration made by a school teacher about comments that Mr Chand allegedly made in his (school teacher's) presence in a shop on 14<sup>th</sup> August this year", Mr Tikoduadua said.

Mr Chand was called into the Labasa Police Station before midday on Friday, taken into custody, questioned by the CID detectives until late that afternoon and released. He was again questioned for more than hour on Saturday afternoon.

"I have spoken to Mr Chand and the Party fully stands by him. It is obvious that he is being targeted by Government after his public exchange with the Prime Minister over his role in the May 2000 coup and its aftermath, which Mr Chand first spoke about in Parliament on 13<sup>th</sup> September".

"We regard him being taken into custody at the Labasa Police Station and being interrogated, as a cowardly act by those who authorised this action".

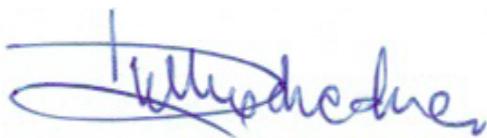
“The international community, particularly those nations who are assisting Fiji once again in preparatory works for the 2018 general elections must know that actions like this where a Government obtains declarations and affidavits on conversations of Opposition MPs and Politicians in order to persecute and intimidate them using law enforcement agencies, after failing to do so within the parliamentary chambers or through the media, is a sure sign of parliamentary and constitutional dictatorship under the pretext of a true and genuine democracy”.

“This action against Mr Chand comes 15 months after the NFP Leader together with five others were incarcerated for over 30 hours in September 2016 for allegedly violating the Public Order (Amendment) Decree for participating in a public forum on the 2013 Constitution. The Office of Director of Public Prosecutions did not lay any charges against them for insufficient evidence and the police in being selective in their arrests”.

“We view Mr Chand’s case in a similar fashion. He is being persecuted, harassed and intimidated for speaking out within his rights and privileges as an honourable member of parliament, and Government through the Attorney General clearly making their intentions known of taking action against Mr Chand by revealing they have a statutory declaration of someone, who we are told is embroiled in controversy”.

“This is clearly collusion between Government and the school teacher”.

“It does not augur well for Fiji’s human rights record as Government bids for a seat on the UNHRC (United Nations Human Rights Council in 2018”.



**Pio Tikoduadua**  
**NFP President**