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MEDIA RELEASE

Suppression of freedom

The National Federation Party Leader Professor Biman Prasad says the refusal by Fiji Police Force to give a permit to the Fiji Trades Union Congress for a march and rally is a suppression of freedom of association and freedom of speech in a nation where government boasts it practices genuine democracy.

“The Fiji Police Force today faces humiliation for its decision to reject the permit. At the outset, it was based on a totally illogical reason that the FTUC National Secretary was under investigation”.

“Less than 18 hours later the Office of Director of Public Prosecutions ruled that the comments made by the National Secretary during a rally following a solidarity march for ATS workers in Nadi on 24th January do not constitute an offence”.

“It is therefore abundantly clear Police misled the workers of Fiji. If the National Secretary was still under investigation, then why was the file on him sent to the DPP for an assessment? The file is only sent to the DPP after investigations are completed”.

“It is now also logical to ask whether the Police independently made its decision to reject the permit or was the Force influenced to do so”.

Professor Prasad said to prevent its image from being further tarnished, the Force has to come out clean and reveal the truth behind the decision to reject the permit on a non-existent issue because “it has now been caught misleading the workers”.

“This is a serious issue because it has directly breached fundamental freedoms of the workers of this country and indeed everyone who had planned to participate in the march to express solidarity and support the issues that were to be highlighted during the march”.

“Breach or violation of any freedom is a breach of human right and a case for the Human Rights and Anti- Discrimination Commission to establish what transpired”.



Professor Biman Prasad
NFP Leader

All correspondence should be addressed to the general secretary