

March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **NFP ANOUNCES TEN MORE PROVISIONAL CANDIDATES**

The National Federation Party has today announced ten more provisional candidates, bringing the number of provisional candidates announced by the Party to 40 so far.

NFP Leader Professor Biman Prasad said the candidates are of high calibre and are ready to be part of an NFP government to serve the people of Fiji with honesty and integrity.

The ten provisional candidates are :-

1. Honourable Pramod Chand.

Honourable Chand is a sitting Member of Parliament for NFP. He also served as a NFP MP from 1994 to 1999. Honourable Chand is a reputable businessman and a successful cane grower based in Vanua Levu.

2. Ms Riddhi Damodar

Ms Damodar is an entrepreneur, a gold medalist in gymnastics and a former journalist and Television presenter in India.

3. Jiosefa Gavidi

Mr Gavidi is a former NFP Suva City Councillor and has served as SCC's Deputy Mayor. He is also a prominent community and social worker and a former teacher.

4. Ms Leba Seni Nabou

Ms Nabou needs little introduction. She is a Vice President of NFP and leads our policy making and communications team. Ms Nabou is an environmental and traditional science advocate, as well as a public relations and policy consultant.

5. Mr Herbert Pickering

Mr Pickering is a well known resident of Lautoka and Savusavu. He is the youngest son of former prominent Cabinet Minister the late David Pickering. Mr Pickering has vast experience as an integral employee in various industries in Australia.

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All correspondence should be addressed to the general secretary

## 6. Mr Tuinadave Radogo

Mr Radogo is NFP's Assistant General Secretary and a successful businessman. He owns and operates Ratu Kini's Backpackers Resort on Mana Island.

## 7. Ms Priyanka Ram

Ms Ram is a social worker and humanitarian scholar. In her role, she has worked with the Red Cross, Fiji Police Force, an orphanage in India and was also a Youth Administrator for Namosi Province.

## 8. Mr Leslie Tikotikoca

Mr Tikotikoca is the youngest son of former Police Commissioner Romanu Tikotikoca. He is a youth and social worker and an advocate for the Fiji Disabled People's Federation.

## 9. Savneel Sangeet

Mr Sangeet is a school teacher by profession who has recently resigned to become a provisional candidate for NFP. He is an avid sports hiker and mountaineer and has represented the Fiji Hiking and Mountaineering Association at events in Fiji and around the world.

## 10. Apenisa Vatuniveivuke

Mr Vatuniveivuke is a law and politics student at University of the South Pacific and a youth advocate.

The NFP is proud of its provisional line-up so far. These are men and women of credibility who have set out to serve our beloved Fiji and put national interest above everything else. They will greatly help NFP bring about the much needed change that Fiji so desperately needs for the better. And there is no doubt that change is coming and change is inevitable because the policies of NFP are designed to enhance the social, economic and political advancement of all our people.

We have, are and will campaign on issues. We will expose the failures of the Fiji First government and provide real credible solutions.

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of our detractors, particularly government, aided and abetted by sections of the media, especially the Fiji Sun, that for all intents and purposes is the Fiji First Sun and Fiji Broadcasting Corporation that has for a while changed for the worse from a National to a State broadcaster.

While they are supposed to, in conformity to their ethics, amplify the voice of the people so that each one of us makes informed decisions and choices. They are unashamedly parroting the tune of Government--we have countless examples of these and it is not worth repeating these. However the two recent cases go beyond the pale.

In the case of Fiji First Sun, the issue of the high price of locally made Rewa butter, you could buy a pound of butter for less than \$5 in 2006. In the last 11 years, the price of butter has almost doubled. I spoke on this issue during our Northern tour last week.

This was never reported by the newspaper but last Saturday, it gave its own analysis through its Managing Editor (News), criticising me and again on Thursday through the Attorney General. These were comments made on FBC's Hindi talk-back show Aaina, reproduced by the Fiji First Sun.

Both the newspaper's analysis and the Attorney General's comments justified the price hike due to high price of bulk butter imported from New Zealand by Fiji Dairy Corporative Ltd. Simply, both Fiji First, Fiji First Sun and State run FBC want the price of butter to remain high at almost \$10 in Viti Levu and over \$10 in Vanua Levu. We will be lucky to get it for between \$9-\$10 during supermarket specials.

The AG said I was wrong. Well the AG is always right, or so he thinks. He can do no wrong. He and his taxpayers' funded newspaper and radio station are misleading our people.

The price of butter is high because the Government is giving preferential treatment to Southern Cross Foods Limited, which is owned by C J Patel. It is the parent company of Fiji Dairy Ltd, the makers of Rewa butter, in which dairy farmers have only 20% shares through Fiji Dairy Corporative Ltd.

The company enjoys zero duty on imports of milk products and it includes butter while other companies pay 32% duty on such imports. This company does not pass on the savings from duty free import to the consumers. .

We expect the nation's chief legal advisor to be truthful and not mislead the people. In this regard, we challenge him to come out clean and tell the people of Fiji whether or not the parent company of Fiji Dairy Lrd enjoys zero duty on imports while the rest of the companies pay 32% duty and yet the price of butter is unaffordable because the company doesn't pass on the benefits of concession to the people.

So to protect the interests of one company, this Government is telling the ordinary people to suffer. If it really had the interest of people at heart, the price of butter would be at least \$2 cheaper than what it is today.

We announce today that an NFP Government will list butter as a basic food item and remove VAT on it. We will remove the zero duty concession enjoyed by the company and allow all importers to compete on a level playing field.

The other issue is the gutter-level accusations labelled against the NFP for campaigning along racial and religious lines. This was started by the Attorney General during a temple meeting in Nakasi a month ago and reportedly reiterated during FBC's Aaina show.

He implied that the NFP was saying Fiji First is a party of South Indians and Muslims. We find this despicable and a desperate act on the part of the AG to use taxpayers funded media organisations like the Fiji First Sun and State controlled FBC to malign us.

We challenge the AG to furnish the nation within the next three days conclusive and irrefutable proof that the NFP leadership or any of its executives and provisional candidates are indulging in such filth. In the absence of such conclusive and irrefutable proof, we regard the AG's comments as highly inflammatory.

We expect the Fiji First, PM and the AG to do much better and remain true to their words of the election being a battle about ideas and not downright lies.

May we put all our detractors on notice – Do not take NFP's name in vain.  
We will not take his lying down.

May God bless Fiji.



**Professor Biman Prasad**  
**NFP Leader**