

# **PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI**



## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

### **DAILY HANSARD**

**FRIDAY, 9TH AUGUST, 2019**

**[CORRECTED COPY]**

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**FRIDAY, 9TH AUGUST, 2019**

The Parliament met at 9.32 a.m., pursuant to notice.

The Honourable Speaker took the Chair and read the Prayer.

**PRESENT**

All Honourable Members were present, except the Honourable S.V. Radrodro.

**MINUTES**

HON. LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT.- Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I move:

That the Minutes of the sitting of Parliament held on Thursday, 8th August, 2019, as previously circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed.

HON. A.A. MAHARAJ.- Honourable Speaker, Sir, I beg to second the motion.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, Parliament will now vote on the motion.

The Question is:

That the Minutes of the sitting of Parliament held on Thursday, 8th August, 2019, as previously circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed.

Does any Member oppose the motion?

(Chorus of 'Nays')

HON. SPEAKER.- As no Member opposes, the motion is agreed to unanimously.

Motion agreed to.

**COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR**

Welcome - Teachers and Students of Adi Maopa Secondary School

HON. SPEAKER.- I welcome all Honourable Members to today's sitting. I also welcome the teachers and students of Adi Maopa Secondary School who are here today.

(Acclamation)

You are most welcome to Parliament and I hope that your visit today will be rewarding, fruitful and productive.

I also welcome members of the public joining us in the gallery and those watching the live broadcast of proceedings on television and the internet, and those listening to the radio.

End of Week Statements

Honourable Members, as you are aware, the Standing Orders prescribe that today's sitting will conclude at 12.30 p.m. In that regard, I will be keeping a close watch on timings for the order of business today, and ensuring that the End of Week Statements must commence at 12.05 p.m. so as to comply with Standing Order 35.

Honourable Members, we will proceed to the next item. I now call upon the Honourable Pio Tikoduadua to move his motion. You have the floor, Sir.

**URGENT APPOINTMENT OF SPECIAL PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE –  
INQUIRY INTO MULTIFACETED RISKS OF HARD DRUG SITUATION IN FIJI**

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Honourable Speaker, I move:

That Parliament urgently appoints a Special Parliamentary Committee under Standing Order 129, to holistically look into the multifaceted risks of the hard drug situation in Fiji.

HON. L.S. QEREQERETABUA.- Honourable Speaker, I second the motion.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, I now invite the Honourable Tikoduadua to speak to the motion. You have the floor, Sir.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Honourable Speaker, today, I rise to present my motion to this august House, filled with a sense of foreboding and sadness. I say this because everyone sitting in this House today is only too aware of the pervasive, insidious and evil challenge we have on our hands with the hard drugs crisis in Fiji.

My sense of foreboding and sadness is because I already know that the Government side will refuse this offer of help and the proposal for a Special Parliamentary Committee under Standing Order 129, despite the most compelling of arguments that I or anyone else on this side of the House will offer today.

But, Honourable Speaker, I would be failing in my duty as an elected representative of the people if I did not raise the issue and the urgency of which this drugs crisis requires a resolute response from the highest court of the land and the People's House. This is what we have been sent here to do - to keep pushing on, regardless.

If we recall my response to the Honourable Minister for Defence's Ministerial Statement on the issue of drugs and crime on Wednesday, Honourable Speaker, I had stated that the Honourable Minister's Statement was reaching out in his call for a unified approach to tackle this vexed issue of hard drugs in Fiji. This motion that I speak to today, therefore, is us, from this side of the House, reciprocating in kind and offering two hands in response, Honourable Speaker.

Honourable Speaker, we know that the issue of drugs is not new in Fiji, whether they are green or synthetic. We are all also acutely aware of that whereas in the past, how drugs may have been accessible to a certain more affluent demographic in our society, it has now become "democratised" by its affordability, because the deceptive allure of money is force-feeding these chemicals into the bloodstreams of our society.

In turn, it has heaped on us seated here in this august House the very real and horrifying splinters of our socio-economic populace to pick up the pieces for. But will we, Honourable Speaker? Will all of us in this august House pick up the mantle today?

The diabolic needles, home-made pipes and other drug paraphernalia are infusing poison into the very veins and lungs of our young people and the longer we take with political point-scoring and offloads of responsibility, the closer this menace encroaches.

We would be naïve and stupid, Honourable Speaker, to think that these drug “issues” are for some “other” to grapple with - some other neighbour, some other community, some other family member. These things have a way of worming themselves into our very safe spaces of family. No man is an island and never has this been truer in an Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook-fuelled world on our island home, where connections are being made every second, in spaces that we as parents, grandparents, uncles and aunts have no control over. This is the reality of the world we live in today.

The Honourable Minister for Defence mentioned the need for stronger family units. I do not disagree, Honourable Speaker, however, if the Police Force is only now “going back to basics” and looking at the failure of family units, I would suggest that this is a little beyond their capabilities and mandate.

The stereotypical family unit in Fiji is no longer as we know it, is not as it is now. The face of a family unit in our urban corridor and rural sections today is fractured. We have single-parent families, we have children being brought up by single parents. We have children, young people and even older citizens living on the streets. None of us has any moral authority to pass judgment on those circumstances. The micro-elements of this dichotomy lending itself to these rise is socio-economic, personal, spiritual, one filled with trauma and hurt.

Honourable Speaker, that is the thrust of what we must deal with and for the Police Force to think they are in the position to engage meaningfully on the social dislocation push factor of the drugs issue, would be pure abdication on our part.

If I am not mistaken, Honourable Speaker, the last time this issue was raised at the last sitting of Parliament, by a supplementary question from Honourable Salote Radrodro in April 2017, where the then Minister for Defence who was detailing *Operation Cavouraka*, confirmed that hard drugs like cocaine, heroin and ice were on the streets. That was two years ago, Honourable Speaker.

In 2014, the former Defence Minister welcomed the Director-General of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). In 2016, one of our own sons of Fiji, a 44-year old crew member of the “*Captain Fearn*”, was arrested on drug charges in Australia when the ship docked there. Three years ago, we saw a spike in a trend where Fiji is exporting drug addicts, and it now becomes another country’s problem to manage. Honourable Speaker, I do not know where Fiji stands on the exporting of drug addicts, by way of numbers at this present time.

Honourable Speaker, my point is that, the Government has been dancing around this issue for years. It is time now to get serious and show, and not just tell, as my colleague, Honourable Qereqeretabua, said earlier this week.

We can no longer tread in shark-infested waters that threaten to drown us, our children and our ancestors coming behind our children. We have a chance today to shape one aspect of a future that we can bequeath them, that is hopeful. We, all 51 elected representatives here in this august House today, sink or swim on this issue today, and equally we will stand condemned, if we choose to sit on our hands about it.

Similarly, Honourable Speaker, the issue of our own people struggling with drug addiction is one that must be looked at with due compassion that it deserves. It is never natural for a human being to crave external toxic chemicals to be coursing through their veins. That is the diabolic nature of hard drugs.

These chemicals alter the people we know, respect and love, and transforms them into monsters with personalities we no longer recognise. These chemicals lead them down dark paths where they do things that they would not ordinarily choose to do. They need help because they are no longer in control of themselves. These pernicious chemicals have taken possession over them and all their faculties.

However, it is those profiteering off poisoning and killing our people whom we must hunt down in a concerted way, and who must face the fullest brunt of the law. They must learn that our people come first and this august House unequivocally has zero tolerance for it.

The spill-over impacts of drug addiction into family structures is one that we can only surmise as one that is equally shaken to its core and traumatised by this dark world. We cannot allow this to go on, on our watch.

Sadly, Honourable Speaker, everyone sitting here today, and I expect even the Minister for Health can also attest to this, is the fact that we have no proper medical facilities to deal with drug rehabilitation and the very necessary, counselling, in a systematic way. We all saw the budget allocations.

At this present time, no one can tell us with any measure of accuracy how many addicts Fiji has, to be able to decipher an intelligent snapshot of the gravity of the problem before us. We are paying catch-up and we will continue to do so, if we are not as united in purpose to defeat this scourge - from this august House, downwards to our people - who will follow our lead.

Honourable Speaker, I will now present some thoughts on a possible terms of reference that such a Special Parliamentary Committee could consider in its mandate, should this august House resolve today to grant it to them:

1. That the members of this Special Committee be chaired by the Honourable Minister of Defence with nominations of 2 Members from the Government side and the Leader of Opposition with his nomination of 2 Members from the Opposition.
2. That this Special Parliamentary Committee be convened for a period of 6 months by which time they must present their findings and recommendations to Parliament.
3. That this Special Parliamentary Committee have the full powers of other Committees as laid out in Standing Order 129, and that the focus of the Committee shall be:
  - a) To appoint an advisory group of experts on sociology, medicine, economics, law enforcement, psychiatry and counselling, community and religious representation, border control, education, media, private sector, and legal practitioners - to advise the Committee at every sitting that this advisory group must include civil society participation. The Special Parliamentary Committee will, of course, have the latitude to widen the membership of this advisory group as they see fit.
  - b) To examine the hard drugs issue in Fiji from three perspectives; the addicts, the drug pushers and the community.

- c) To table a report that includes legislative, policy and budgetary analysis and recommendations to this august House to then decide on.

Honourable Speaker, I know that one of the key concerns of the Government will be the cost element that is un-budgeted for, and that is valid. To that end, I would further suggest that one of the primary priorities of the Special Parliamentary Committee should be to source donor assistance to support the urgent work of the Committee.

Furthermore, Honourable Speaker, it behooves us as elected representatives to show our unity of purpose on battling this drug scourge by leading by example and thus making compulsory and public our own individual drug testing. Such a move would certainly inspire our young people.

In closing, please, allow me to reiterate again, Honourable Speaker, that today we have a chance to shape one aspect of a drug-free future that we can bequeath to our children and their ancestors, that is hopeful. And that equally, we will all stand condemned, if we choose to sit on our hands about it. The choice is yours.

I thank you, Honourable Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Member for his motion.

Honourable Members, the floor is open for debate on this motion.

HON. RATU N.T. LALABALAVU.- Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir. I rise to also contribute on the debate regarding the motion that is before the House, Mr. Speaker, Sir. As aside from the intents of the motion that has been fully explained by the mover of the motion, we on this side of the House would also like to take this opportunity in accepting the offer or perhaps a challenge that was offered by the Honourable Minister for Defence a couple of days ago, regarding this very subject.

How best can we, in this honourable House, be able to combat this big problem that we are now encountering. We would like to take up that challenge, Mr. Speaker, Sir. If I can go back to a couple of years ago when the Honourable Minister was still a Commissioner up in the North, this happened also during the time when Commander Teleni was the Head of the Police over the Interim Government period, we had several functions up there in the North, especially on the island of Taveuni, Sir.

We had a big function regarding how to combat crime, including this problem. Even the setting up of the blue cadetship or blue training that is offered to the youth to engage them meaningfully in some kind of programmes that ensured that they are educated through the process that they have, to see for themselves the hard effects of this problem.

There was a good group of police officers that had some kind of educational programme on drugs, headed by Senior Police Officers. But again, Sir, as a traditional leader, we are encountering this and we need to solve this. But if we had similar programmes that were running at that time by the same people who are in Government now, all I am trying to ask is, in taking up this challenge, Mr. Speaker, Sir, we stand ready to play our part as they as well. Perhaps, if the Honourable Minister could revisit this programme because they were effective, even for the Tunuloa area - a renowned area for *marijuana*.

We had a police post established there during his time. As I said before, maybe he was doing this because his better half is from Cakaudrove or what, I really do not know, but, again the effect of it was there. He was able to gather the chiefs for this programme, he was able to gather the *vanua* for this programme and we are not going to be sitting idly here, Sir, without taking up this challenge. We stand

ready, Sir, to combat this problem, as aside from what the intent of the motion by setting up a Committee in Parliament.

We offer that great possibility of revisiting that programme once more in soliciting the help and the effective participation of the *vanua* so as to ensure that we combat this problem there and then. Drugs is on our shores, right in Taveuni, whether you name it "*marijuana*" or even the "hard drugs", we have it, how it has got there, it is amazing.

Yesterday, we were talking about roll on roll off, we hope that through the process of roll on roll off, the betterment of the shipping, the betterment of the policing of how baggages are taken on board, the passengers' safety, et cetera - this is another way of ensuring that we come to that. That was done during the Honourable Minister's time as Commissioner.

We checked baggage and everything that got transferred from Natuvu to Taveuni. Sir, here we have a problem and we stand ready to play our part, and most importantly, Sir, we are not going to be sitting idly here as well, we will take up your challenge, Honourable Minister. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu for his contribution to the debate.

I now give the floor to the Honourable Professor Biman Prasad. You have the floor.

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to strongly support this motion and Honourable Pio Tikoduadua quite rightly said that when the Honourable Minister Seruiratu spoke yesterday, he did urge all of us to work together.

Mr. Speaker, this is one motion where I honestly feel, I mean, we have heard from the Government side all the time - "The Opposition must come with ideas", "Come up with facts", "Let's work together", "Let's do something together". This is an opportunity, Honourable Speaker, because this motion is not about politics as they say quite frequently. This is about a situation that we all are confronted with in this country today, and we need to deal with it.

I know we have had this usual response; yes, government has policies; yes, Government is doing this - that is fine. But, Mr. Speaker, this is an issue which requires a detailed inquiry, it requires experts in different areas to tell us in Parliament and the Government as to what is the real situation. It will also involve looking at some hard statistics.

Mr. Speaker, if you look at the issue with drugs in many countries which have been ravaged by this, it has destroyed the economic, social and moral fabric of those societies, and the biggest impact is always on the society. The cost to the society of this menace of drug can be very very high.

As Honourable Tikoduadua pointed out very clearly, we are suggesting a terms of reference, of course, we are suggesting that it will be Chaired by the Honourable Minister for Defence and the Committee will be informed by the experts.

Mr. Speaker, there are issues about policies, looking at critical areas, funding allocation, healthcare, crime, lost productivity and the spread of infectious diseases, Mr. Speaker, is also the spread or increased by this drug paraphernalia, where it is shared by people. Deaths due to overdose - we have not had many cases of that, but if we continue with the kind of hard drugs that we see in this country, we will see that as well. Effects on unborn children and its impact on pregnant mothers. We need to, Mr.

Speaker, look at the cost of crime emanating out of drug, unemployment, domestic abuse, family dissolution, homelessness. These are all evidences of drug abuse, drug menace in our society.

Last year, Mr. Speaker, the Police Commissioner told the Police Narcotics Workshop of cocaine haul of about \$43 million. According to him, this excluded cocaine fines in Savusavu and Lau. So, Mr. Speaker, the figures are quite alarming. I mean, we had the discovery of \$31 million worth of cocaine in Caubati and that, itself, could be just the tip of the ice berg. Mr. Speaker, there are fears that hard drugs are imported into Fiji on a much bigger scale now than what it used to be.

One view, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about hard drugs is that, only the wealthy in our society could afford hard drugs, but far more serious one is that those who are already on the edge of poverty are now engaged in crime and selling what little they have to access themselves to drugs. So, Mr. Speaker, you know, this is a very important national motion, one that Parliament should take seriously.

I would urge the Government, Mr. Speaker, to take this on board. The Government would be in control of the Committee as we were suggesting that the Chairperson of the Committee should be the Minister for Defence. It will be an independent Parliamentary Committee looking at these very specific issues that are affecting the country.

Mr. Speaker, most countries, and in fact in any country which has been able to tackle national menaces like this, have done this through bipartisan, national, cooperative committees which bring out the real issues. There are a lot of unresolved issues, we do not know the flashpoints, we do not know what is happening. Normally, in terms of how drugs are imported, how the police are able to deal with it, how we are dealing with the drug addicts, how we are helping them medically - these are all issues that need to be brought together and then put all that in the overall context of the impact that it will have on our society and our economy, the amount of Government resources that could go in looking after people if we have this huge problem of drug addiction in this country.

So, I think the Committee, Mr. Speaker, will bring out all these different issues and will provide a very very good basis for Government to intervene, put out policies, to get funding, to get our donor partners and international partners to actually cooperate in those areas to deal with those issues.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would urge the Government to support this motion and let us set up this Committee and deal with this big issue that is facing the country today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Professor Biman Prasad. Honourable Minister for Defence, National Security and Foreign Affairs, Honourable Seruiratu, you have the floor.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir, for the opportunity to speak on the motion.

I rise this morning to say that I oppose the motion before the House. It is a half-hearted motion by the mover, Mr. Speaker, Sir. He has no confidence in his motion.

But, Mr. Speaker, Sir, this is stratagem at play, and the Honourable mover of the motion knows this very well. You do not go into battle when you are not ready.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the reason why Government came up with the statement and I delivered the statement because that was a shaping operation. We know the plans and the strategies that we already have in place, but very quickly looking at the surfaces and gaps, the mover of the motion seized the opportunity to take ownership of the strategy and the battle plan that we have.

(Honourable Member interjects)

HON. SPEAKER.- Order, order!

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, we very well know where that motion is coming from. We just wanted to hear you. Now, you are on our side already, that was the shaping that we wanted to do, because it is coming, it is about to be launched. Where will you stand when we bring the strategy into play?

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have been in this House for a few years, sometimes I compare the other side with professional surfers. They lie low and they wait for the next wave, and when the wave comes they quickly ride on the wave. They just wait for the wave. It was our wave, Mr. Speaker, Sir. Professional surfers on the other side of the House, always ride on the wave.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I thank the Honourable Member for the motion. This is just equally as important as the motion last night ...

HON. MEMBER.- Hear, hear.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- ... about the violence against women because these are the issues that we need to tackle. When I was sitting here last night, Mr. Speaker, Sir, it reminded me of that battlefield when Goliath (the Philistine giant) was challenging the Israelites, "Give me a man."

HON. MEMBER.- *Laivi koya.*

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- But there was no man. All male organs intact, but no one was man enough to stand up and fight the evil.

The motion last night called for men to stand up and fight the evil that we have in society. Men are meant to love everyone. I wanted to speak to the men, Mr. Speaker, Sir, but there were no men last night. No courage, no boldness, ducked under the table!

(Laughter)

Mr. Speaker, Sir, stratagem is at play, and I am thankful to the other Honourable Members of the House that you are now in our fold.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, Government takes this responsibility seriously. Seriously! And that is why in my Ministerial Statement the other day, I talked about what we are already doing. The Police Force are doing an excellent work. You look at the number of arrests, I must assure this august House that the Police Force are doing their best. Go to Suva now, it is all well-lit because I promised the other day, that that was part of this plan and it is all well-lit now, Mr. Speaker, Sir, so you can stroll the streets of Suva safe, because with presence and the lighting, there will be safe environment in our Suva streets.

What is coming up, Mr. Speaker, Sir? We already have the Volatile Substance Abuse Control Bill which hopefully, when we undergo the final consultations with the Office of the Solicitor-General, with the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, with the Ministry for Women, with the Ministry for Education, with Civil Society Organisations, Non-Government Organisations, definitely that will come into the House, that is when we need that support, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

(Honourable Member interjects)

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- You are already on this side, I have caught you.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have the National Narcotics Bureau Bill. Mr. Speaker, Sir, you have to have confidence in your plan.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Because they are already in the plan, Mr. Speaker, Sir, they are already attacking it again, but caught you already.

(Laughter)

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- The National Narcotics Bureau Bill, Mr. Speaker, Sir, is also going through the consultation process now. This is the shaping. We were preparing you for what is coming next, that is where your contribution will be.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, this is not the battlefield, the battlefield is out there in the streets. The battlefield is out there in the schools, the battlefield is out there in the communities, not in Parliament Committees, Mr. Speaker, Sir. But when the legislation comes into this House, that is where we want the support and contribution from Honourable Members of Parliament, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

Another key component, Mr. Speaker, Sir, is the rehabilitation, something that we do not have in Fiji. I have done the first round of consultation and hopefully this afternoon, we will do the next round of consultation because right now, St. Giles Hospital is not meant for that purpose.

The Ministry of Health has exhausted all that they have in terms of trying to solve this problem. But the long term solution, Mr. Speaker, Sir, is for us to have, and Government does not necessarily have to own this, it can be outsourced to Civil Society Organisations.

This is what is coming up, Mr. Speaker, Sir, where we will have the contribution from Honourable Members of Parliament. Again, Government is serious about the issues that we face and drugs is not an exception. But, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I again wish to remind Honourable Members on the other side of the House that we, in Government, are doing all that we have to do in order to get this issue addressed.

May I also mention a few things on the National Narcotics Strategy and the Bureau that I have talked about, Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is a document that is specifically tailored to effectively address the escalating drug problems and address both, synthetic and plant-based drugs. This will include the supply reduction, demand to reduction and harm reduction.

As they have talked about, there are pushers, there are producers and there are people who use these products, Mr. Speaker, Sir. So, when we have that Narcotics Centre and the Bill that will come into place, this is where we will have the contribution from the other side of the House.

As I have alluded to earlier, Mr. Speaker, Sir, we just wanted to hear them on Wednesday when we delivered the Ministerial Statement, and I am thankful that they are already on our side. Again, I urge other Honourable Members, after we adjourn, let us go and visit the schools. Let us influence those out there in our communities.

May I also mention, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that there is also another Bill related to the National Security Strategy, on borders (including the 17 Border Agencies) that is also on its way into this august House, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

So, in summary, Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is no need for this Committee. The Committee already has a lot on their hands but definitely, Honourable Members of this august House will contribute because it is coming hopefully in the next sitting of Parliament, once the consultations have been concluded. But we got that this morning, Mr. Speaker, Sir. They want to seize the opportunity but again this is Government's initiative, Government's strategy and let Government take control of this initiative, Mr. Speaker, Sir. I thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Prime Minister, you have the floor.

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Honourable Speaker, I rise to contribute to the motion on the floor.

Honourable Speaker, first and foremost, I wish to reassure the Members of Parliament and the Fijian people that this Government has zero-tolerance for anyone who disrespects or violates the laws of this country. The reason media reports on the discovery of hard drugs being transhipped through Fiji shows that we are no longer isolated from drug-trafficking, unprecedented growth over the last decade has meant that Fiji is becoming attractive to both good and bad influences.

This Government remains vigilant of new and emerging patterns of illegal drug use. We are aware of the extent of the hard drug situation in Fiji. The complexity and pervasiveness of drug misuse and the harm it causes means that no one can tackle it alone.

Mr. Speaker, Government recognises that at both national and local levels, international partners, private sector, communities and the public - all have a role to play. It is vital that we work together in a coordinated partner-based approach to build a fairer and healthier society to reduce crime, improve life chances and protect the most vulnerable.

Mr. Speaker, what we need is a more-coordinated approach which complements wider across Government action. To develop this, we will engage extensively with key partners in the relevant field, including health, law enforcement, border agencies, education, legal practitioners and academics.

Honourable Speaker, Government is working on a national framework, the National Narcotic Strategy which would guide the work of Government. Enforcement agencies like the Fiji Police Force, the Fiji Navy and Customs Board officials have amplified investments in capacity-building; Hi-Tech equipment for better detection and also organise outreach activities. The people of Fiji can be rest-assured that this Government is committed to the safety and security of all Fijians.

Based on these remarks, Honourable Speaker, I therefore do not support the motion.

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Prime Minister. Honourable Niko Nawaikula, you have the floor.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Thank you, Honourable Speaker. The first thing that I wish to ask for in this House in relation to this is for the Minister responsible for police to be sacked or to resign because he is not doing his job.

(Laughter)

He must admit that he has failed in the war against drugs.

In the last month, I have been asking the same for the Commissioner of Police, you cannot do it, admit your failure. The Honourable Minister can bring in so many laws. He can make the laws go as high as that but you cannot resolve it. You must identify what the problem is and I think you should listen to his own Commissioner of Police. This is what he said, “A lot of questions arose as to why these crimes occurred however I believe the solution lies in the question as to why the moral values that we hold dear as a society slowly deteriorates.”

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- That is the reason - the destruction of moral values. You want to put God outside, expect that. You want to put God in the periphery, expect that. You want to take God, you want to take nuns and priests out of the school, expect that. You want to take chaplains out of QVS and all that, expect that. When the moral values decay, you must expect that. You can put laws as high, as high, as high and you can never achieve it - that is the reason.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. SPEAKER.- Order, order!

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- That is the reason and we have the problem (you were here), when we pray here, Honourable Speaker, who do we pray to?

HON. MEMBER.- We all know it.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- And I want to suggest if the Speaker is a Christian, we pray to a Christian God and we ask everyone to pray to their own God, gods. When I say “God”, whatever we perceive Him to be, if we put God in the middle, everything will fall into place; Krishna, Rama, Jesus Christ, Allah - that is how it is. This is it.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. SPEAKER.- Order, order!

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- That is the reason why so, please, listen to the Commissioner and that is the reason why we are asking the House to listen to anyone because they have a stake in here and they want to bring in their own solution, they do not want to hear anyone. This motion is asking that we set this up so we hear housewives, so we hear children, so we hear priests, so we hear nuns, so we hear Talatalas, ...

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- ... come here and give their views, because these are women, these are the retainers of our moral values, not your solutions, not laws.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. SPEAKER.- Order, order!

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- And we must listen to that. Now, talking about crime in general, there is now, I am telling you, Honourable Speaker, an era of general lawlessness - increase in crime, increase in rape, increase in domestic violence, increase in drugs, increase in everything and that was acknowledged by the Honourable Minister coming here to give that statement yesterday and ...

HON. MEMBER.- Selective moral values.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- ... he was quoting from figures from long ago - three years ago, here - 2016. He should be quoting now ...

(Honourable Member interjects)

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- ... the statistics now are very alarming, that is even out of date!

(Laughter)

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Honourable Speaker, this is from July. Wow! This is quoting village news:

“There were 24 people (this is in June alone) charged with a total of 45 counts of separate sexual offences, of that 45, yet two juveniles and a police officer, shame on you, were charged with separate rape cases.

Even the police are raping - two cases of marital rape and a case of a 29 year old *Facebook* fan having sexual intercourse with 16-year old children. What are the police doing?

A 13 year old boy was charged with rape of his three year old niece, that is the moral decay that I am talking about.

A 14 year old boy was charged with the rape of his six year old cousin while a 23-year old police officer, again, was charged with the rape of a 34-year old fellow police officer.”

What kind of police do we have? That is why I am saying, we should sack him. There are good people around there who can be Minister for Police.

Please, if you are serious, you must appoint a separate Head of Police. Here, Dr. Salik - that is the best person.

(Laughter)

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- He is more qualified than all of you here. He was seconded to the UN, he was recognised by the UN.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- He spent eight years in Bolivia.

HON. SPEAKER.- Order, order!

(Laughter)

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Honourable Speaker, he was there because the UN recognised his work in Lau, the UN recognised his work in the West and where are you putting him? Right there! He should be right in front here.

(Laughter)

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- No, I am serious! People you are choosing cannot do the work.

There were 30 cases of rape, nine cases of abduction with intent to have carnal knowledge, one case of indecent assault, three cases of defilement, two cases of sexual assault, June alone. I am now talking about June - there were 22 victims, of whom 13 victims were under the age of 18 years. That is the sign of moral decay and you do not solve moral decay by building laws, you can make the laws to go right up to the sky, you will not do it.

A fifth battlefield is right here, as I said, you put God in the middle and everything will fall into place. A 56-year-old woman is in the list, and there are many more. I am saying, that is a general state of lawlessness.

Coming to drugs, and I said - they must admit that they have lost it, appoint a new Police Commissioner, appoint a new Minister for Police, and they have been warned here, many years ago. Methamphetamine did not only just come in now, it was there three or four years ago, here. Quoting the Commissioner of Police, he said, "... Amongst this illicit drug trade is the imminent emergence of sale and use of methamphetamine" commonly known as "ice".

This was three, four years ago. So, you are trying to go to the battlefield now. What were you doing at that time, and it is not only here, it is in the villages too.

Honourable Speaker, in my village now, the young people are drunk for three days - today, tomorrow and the next, and it is different, and they know. It is different from our time, it is different from your time, I am sure, Honourable Speaker.

During your time, you will probably go, mix homebrew, come back, people through the girlfriend's window and say "Goodbye" and go home. But this time, they are there for three days.

HON. MEMBER.- Tell them.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- And I asked them, "Why is he behaving like that?" He said, "That's ice." Why is he behaving like that, "That's marijuana". Why did he behave like that, "That's drugs".

HON. S. KOROILAVESAU.- You seem to know it well.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- I know it well because it is entrenched. I am talking about moral decay. It is like, if you want a coconut, you go and climb a coconut tree. Now, they are going to climb a banana tree to get coconut, you cannot do it. You cannot do it because they are taking it in the wrong way. Here, they are saying that they can do it on their own. No, come to this House, let everyone in Fiji come here to give their views.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Only a month (last month here), just look at what the newspapers are saying, in the last month one month, 24th July, the headline - "Alert over liquid meth"; Thursday, 25<sup>th</sup> - "Drug war goes global"; Friday, 26<sup>th</sup> - "Hard drugs, Police Force probe their own", here, that is how bad that is. They are selling drugs in the police barracks. The people who are ready to go to the battlefield to fight drugs are doing it. Here, July, 29<sup>th</sup>, "New Zealand expressing concern", even the United States of America, the U.S. spy network has already warned you that the laboratories are already here and you are still talking about the battlelines. The battlelines have been there already, the laws should be up already, the laboratories are everywhere. That is the delay and I am saying, you must admit you have lost it, you lost your war on drugs. Sack the Police Commissioner, sack you too - Appoint Dr. Salik!

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- No, we are waiting for too long, that is enough!

My third point is this, Honourable Speaker, correctly stated by the Commissioner of Police, there is a moral decay. If you take God to the periphery, you will not solve it. Bring God to the middle and everything will come into place. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Member. We will now take a morning tea adjournment - 15 minutes only. When we finish morning tea, we will continue with this debate but remember the time factors regarding today's sitting.

We adjourn for morning tea.

The Parliament adjourned at 10.30 a.m.

The Parliament resumed at 10.47 a.m.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, we will continue with the debate on this agenda item. Honourable Viliame Gavoka, you have the floor.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Thank you, Honourable Speaker. I rise to speak in support of the motion before the House and at the outset, Honourable Speaker, I have to ask the question as to why throughout the life of the previous Parliament and this Parliament that the FijiFirst Government is averse to anything bi-partisan.

We have tried many times, Honourable Speaker, to set up bi-partisan Committees to look into issues of importance to the country, but it is always rejected by the FijiFirst Government. We do not understand this, Honourable Speaker, because if you go to the Ministerial Statement made by the Honourable Minister a few days ago, he said; “I do acknowledge and concur with the Honourable Prime Minister that the illicit drugs situation in Fiji needs a collaborative and more cohesive effort from all segments of our society.” If he was saying that, what better way is there than a Committee made up of parliamentarians to carry out this dialogue and consultation across the country and highlight the danger of drugs in our society.

My concern, Honourable Speaker, is that, I live in a village, and as you know, in the villages, there is this culture of silence. We are not comfortable talking about matters that are foreign to us; they do not understand. We rather stay quiet.

What is devastating, Honourable Speaker, is when hard drugs come into the village. The elders do not know what to say, the church does not know what to say, even the education system. So it is good that the parliamentarians take ownership of this and take it to the grass-root level and carry out dialogue so that people are empowered to understand and speak up about drug issues.

It can be devastating as we all know. That is why, Honourable Speaker, I support this motion and I wish that Government would take on the suggestion by Honourable Tikoduadua and carry out this dialogue across the country.

Also, Honourable Speaker, I cannot let some of the comments made this morning go past us; comments made about our silence last evening. We sat stoically through the proceedings last night and why it was, Honourable Speaker, was hypocrisy being played out on a scale that was breathtaking. We sat through that.

I was wondering how people can rise to that level and then lecture across the House when they know themselves that lecture is a double-edged sword; it cuts both ways. Instead of showing maturity and handling it in a mature way, we had to go that way last night, Honourable Speaker. I mean, hypocrisy in the sense that violence against women and children has increased by 300 percent since 2006.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. SPEAKER.- Order, order!

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- And who has been in charge? Who has been at the helm of this country since 2006? So, Honourable Speaker, let us be careful because hypocrisy will find you out.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Honourable Speaker, we can relate to issues but we give them ....

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. SPEAKER.- Order, order!

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- ... instances of cases, of a situation where a young lass was moved to tears when verbally abused by someone from the other side at a hotel we all went to. So let us not throw rocks in a glass house, Honourable Speaker, and we want to be mature about this, we want to resolve the issue but not in a manner that it was played out last night. Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. SPEAKER.- Order, order!

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- I would like to say that the motion before the House is worthy of ....

HON. GOVERNMENT MEMBER.- Hypocrites!

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Honourable Speaker, the motion before the House is worthy of the support from both sides of the House and I wish to embrace it and take it forward. Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Gavoka. Honourable Minister for Health, you have the floor.

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- Honourable Speaker, thank you for this opportunity. I do not support the motion before the House for a few reasons. The Honourable Minister for Defence has talked about the extensive and comprehensive discussions and strategies that are in place that we have been working with collectively within Government to be able to look at this issue and this must be allowed an opportunity to do it.

We have also been talking not only internally but also externally looking at our partners who have had experience in this and therefore these strategies that we have in place, as the Honourable Minister for Defence has said, it seems like it has been taken out of us in a sense that it has been brought to the House as a motion.

When you talk about numbers, Honourable Speaker, when numbers seem to appear that they rise, that does not necessarily mean that there is a 100 percent or 200 percent rise, for example, in a particular thing that is being discussed. It may mean there is better detection; it may mean there is better policing and in a way, when we look at numbers, it may not necessarily mean that there is much significant greater use, but the fact of the matter is because there is more awareness, there is more policing, there are better safety nets in place and better laws to just picking it up. And what we need to do is there is a Fijian term called "*domo levu*" which means to call it out and what we can do, because that is what been brought up by the Opposition is what can we do as a Member of Parliament. This is what we need to do, we need to call it out.

HON. J. USAMATE.- Hear, hear!

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- We need to go back into our communities and say, "This is wrong, drug abuse is wrong, substance abuse is wrong, drug trafficking is wrong." Whenever we go when we are invited to participate in a conference, we must call it out. And last night the 8th August will be a night and a day that will be remembered in the history of this House.

HON. A. SUDHAKAR.- Hear, hear!

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- And in the history of Fiji. It was a day for them to call it out. To call out and say that condemnation against women, violence against women and discrimination based on race are unacceptable, and they did not call it out.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. SPEAKER.- Order, order!

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- They chose to be silent, they can talk as much as they want today, tomorrow or forever more, but you will not bring what yesterday's opportunity has reached.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- They must remember that in the history of this House ...

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. SPEAKER.- Order!

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- ... it will be forever remembered that they missed that opportunity. Today is a day to call it out. When we leave this august House and we go out into our communities, call it out, say that drug trafficking is wrong.

Tell your people, tell the communities, tell civil society groups, tell the schools, tell the health centres, let them know that it is unacceptable. Do not let this be the Government's role only, do not let this be the schools only, let all of us collectively do it and work with the strategy that Government has in place.

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Tell them!

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- Thank you, Honourable Speaker, for this opportunity.

HON. GOVERNMENT MEMBERS.- *Vinaka, vinaka.*

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Ro Filipe Tuisawau, you have the floor.

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir. I rise to contribute in support of the motion. There has been a lot of things said yesterday, this morning linking to yesterday. Some have been linked to morality, the word "hypocrisy" has been raised and I think hypocrisy is a good word which describes a lot of situations.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. SPEAKER.- Order!

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- Especially when it is addressed in a way that castigates someone else, but the person who is doing that has not admitted their wrongs. So when you cast a stone, you will also need to look at the person, look at yourself and that is what Honourable Gavoka has said in terms of the discussion yesterday and raised again today.

That is something which we in Parliament need to keep in mind. Yes, we can discuss issues but at the same time let us not throw stones, at each other, accusing each other, but at the same time the person throwing that stone has not even looked at himself or herself.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. SPEAKER.- Order, order!

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, what I am saying is that, let us do some self-examination before you start accusing others. The facts of the matter is that, a lot of individuals, ...

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. SPEAKER.- Order!

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- ... some of the individuals on the other side of the House have been involved in what they are accusing others of, from 2006 up to now and that was clearly documented, it has been discussed in the public circles, so be careful if you throw a stone, look at yourself first.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. SPEAKER.- Order!

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, I think the drug situation in the country is something which everyone is discussing and the Government side has described their side and we are not sure about the situation. There have been statistics which have been shared with us, but it is good that we have something such as, “investigative journalism” which really is what the country needs in terms of, not only drugs but other issues such as corruption, et cetera. Sadly, that is lacking in this country and I have not seen any media doing that, especially the *Fiji Sun* and FBC. Where is their investigative journalism? It seems that they are focussed on political vindication.

So, I would like to share with you, the drug situation that we are going through is the subject of international news in the last two or three months. I ask, “Why has it reached that level in terms of international media interest?” That is a result of investigative journalism and on 1st July, 2019, *Aljazeera* which captures worldwide audience, millions of viewers, it broadcasts worldwide via satellite cable through internet protocol, social media, et cetera, and has 80 bureaus around the world, ran a story on Fiji, titled, “Has Fiji become a super drugs super highway?”

So, we wonder what the situation is and what the urgency is in terms of the address by Government. The Report states that it is a David and Goliath problem and the methamphetamine and cocaine routes are now coming through South America, through South Pacific to Australia and New Zealand. The Report also states that Fiji is not really a transit point but is a secondary market which means that there are methamphetamine laboratories and the number of users domestically has increased but to what level, we are not sure, that needs a proper study and research, I suppose.

In terms of Fiji as a secondary market, there are a few issues identified; inexperienced law enforcement, ill-equipped to handle trafficking, addiction and growing threats of violence. They have in fact labelled Fiji as a “semi-narco region.” “Narco region” means a region which is dominated by narcotics. Not only that, there was another investigative report by the *UK Guardian* in the United Kingdom on 23<sup>rd</sup> June, 2019 which basically stated that the multi-million dollar drug operation involving cocaine, methamphetamine comes through USA to Australia via South Pacific Islands.

In the past five years there has been explosion in the number of boats, caught in the middle are countries such as Fiji. They actually visited Fiji, did a series of research and interviews and one of the professors they interviewed from the University of Queensland stated, “You draw a line between Borgata and Canberra, it goes straight through the islands.” The Pacific has been a transit point for drug group for decades but law enforcement and security analysts told *The Guardian*, “the use of the route appears to have increased dramatically in the last five years.”

Since 2014, Australian Federal Police have been involved in the seizure of 7.5 tonnes of cocaine in small vessels such as yachts, et cetera, and some of that we have also seen in Fiji. There have been major seizures of drugs in French Polynesia, New Caledonia and each of the shipments has been worth \$200 million or in excess. The region is caught in a perfect storm. Cocaine production is at its highest rate and the appetite for consumption has increased dramatically.

Drugs come through Australia, through a range of means including cargo ships, cruise ships, et cetera. This is because of the increased surveillance of flights so the routes via sea is becoming a viable one for the drug smugglers.

The other comments made or interviews, Superintendent Brett Kidner of Australian Federal of Police said during his time based in Suva, he noticed the shift in attitudes toward illicit drugs in the Pacific whereas initially they considered it predominantly a problem for Australia and New Zealand as they were merely transit points. At the end they were starting to see a significant increase in the use in Fiji, Tonga and Samoa.

The Commissioner of Police, Commander Qiliho stated, and I quote:

“Transitional shipment of drugs through the Pacific is not only a cause of Fiji’s burgeoning domestic drug problem” (that is a recognition that it is a domestic drug-problem which is why this side of the House is supporting the bipartisan committee) “and also linked to the booming tourism industry, an increased wealth in the country.”

They also spoke to a drug addict, Ian, who has lived in Fiji for most of his life, and has fallen into drug addiction. He told *The Guardian* that the nation’s drug problem could no longer be described as emerging, but has well emerged and sizeable.

Speaking on a sunny afternoon at a popular café in Nadi, he says, and I quote:

“A 100 metres from where you are (*speaking to the reporter*), you can purchase methamphetamine and cocaine just like that. No problem, no problem at all!”

This is what the drug addict said. And he continued, I quote:

“That it comes with terrible violence, like in any country at the top of the food chain, drug dealers here are dangerous men, very bad. They have you kidnapped, dropped off in the bush somewhere, they will smash your knee caps, they can get you killed.”

That is a phenomenon which is recent, and we have witnessed and seen that in the statistics that we have shared.

He continued saying:

I would suggest that there would be, at least, seven to eight deaths, through that stuff,” at which he was speaking.

The other interesting part which the investigative reporter spoke of was, there is no data collected in Fiji about drug use or addiction. There is no rehabilitation centre in Fiji, and I am pleased that that is being looked at, as mentioned by the Honourable Minister. There is no addiction health specialist, so probably for the Honourable Minister for Health, and not even a narcotics anonymous centre. If they need treatment, they end up in St. Giles, the psychiatric hospital, and nearly 20 percent of its patients in the year 2017 to April 2018, were treated for substance abuse, mostly for addiction to *methamphetamine*. So it looks like that has overtaken *marijuana*.

The Oceania Customs Organisation, again, acknowledges this problem and indicates that those involved are creative, well-funded, constantly moving and innovative criminal element. We cover one-third of the world's mass porous borders, maritime borders, et cetera, geographical spread, limited resources, are some of the constraints mentioned.

Those are two investigative reports that I was sharing in order to emphasise the urgency of the situation, which is why our proposal on this side of the House is something which needs to be seriously considered, a Joint Parliamentary Committee and I think will be good for the nation if they look at us cooperating on a particular issue. Surely, we have not agreed on lot of issues, from this side of the House we have supported your motions, but we have never supported one motion. Never! But on the record we have supported Government motions, so I ask about the sincerity when they mention, "Let us work together, let us be partisan", and all that.

National frameworks, again, that has been mentioned and Honourable Speaker, it is a national emergency, that is why our colleague is proposing this. Other than that, we could look at a national drug curriculum.

The legislation has been mentioned, Volatile Substances Bill, we urge that that be fast-tracked. There are other Bills which have been fast-tracked here under Standing Orders.

Lastly, Honourable Speaker, the Dangerousness of Drugs Act that was last reviewed in 1991, needs to be reviewed urgently. The other thing about Volatile Substances Bill is the glue sniffing in schools, which the Honourable Minister for Education would allude to. That is very, very urgent in terms of addressing that, restricting the sale of glue.

With those words, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I stand in support of the motion. *Vinaka*.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister for Fisheries, you have the floor.

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Thank you, Honourable Speaker, Sir. I wish to make a contribution towards the motion before this august House, and not the mad house as was referred to by Honourable Nawaikula twice this week. Let me state now that I do not support the motion before the House.

Honourable Speaker, I am sure that you would be just surprised as I am in here this morning to hear long standing explanations from Honourable Members on the other side of the House. It is interesting to see Honourable Members jumping out of their seats in competition for a space to make a delivery.

Yesterday, Honourable Speaker, we, on this side of the House, have called it "silence on the 8th of August".

HON. MEMBER.- Respect the law.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. SPEAKER.- Order, order!

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- “Silence on the 8th of August” will be written in the history of this Parliament, Honourable Speaker.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Very true, very true.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister, I almost pick you up on repetition - you have been saying “Silence, silence, silence”.

HON. MEMBER.- Sit down.

HON. SPEAKER.- You have the floor.

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Honourable Speaker, I just wanted to be heard because there is a lot of interruptions from the other side.

The Honourable Members of the Opposition have suddenly found their galls which was visibly missing last night.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. SPEAKER.- Order, order!

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- They have totally missed the boat or the *bilibili* that departed last night.

(Laughter)

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Honourable Nawaikula should not come to this House and try to show his moral high ground. He did not have that high ground last night. He did not utter a single word.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- A Point of Order.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister, a Point of Order.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- He is too much, he has been warned to talk on the issue and be relevant.

HON. SPEAKER.- You heard the Point of Order. Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- He does not have any call. That will be the same for Honourable Gavoka, you do not have any call. You did not have any power or energy to protect the women and children of Fiji, ...

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- ... protect the women and the girls of Fiji!

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- A Point of Order.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister, just stick to this motion.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Honourable Speaker, this is why I said . . . .

HON. SPEAKER.- Just keep to the contents of this motion. You have the floor.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Enough!

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- I can summarise it. Honourable Speaker, that they are all traitors, all traitors for the women and girls of Fiji.

HON. GOVERNMENT MEMBERS.- Hear, hear!

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Honourable Speaker, now I would like to go to the main subject of discussion that is before the House this morning. I acknowledge Honourable Tikoduadua's motion, but I must reflect and reiterate what the Honourable Minister has said, that the Government has policies in place to combat drug issues.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Too late! It's the timing.

HON. SPEAKER.- Order!

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is only vital that we must be aware of all the measures that are in place and logically evaluate whether we need to establish a Special Parliamentary Committee or not.

In the Honourable Minister's Ministerial Statement to this House earlier this week, he outlined the various initiatives that are currently being implemented or about to be rolled out to curb the drug issue. As he has already alluded to, he has the National Narcotic Strategy. This Strategy, Mr. Speaker, Sir, is a policy document which is specifically tailored to effectively address the escalation of drug problem and will address both, synthetic and plant-based drugs.

The Strategy outlines wholesome approach and consists of three priority areas: supply reduction, demand reduction and harm reduction.

Honourable Speaker, Sir, this document will simultaneously tackle all the issues from every angle by cutting or disrupting supply, deviating and influencing the reduction of demand, and rehabilitating Fijians' post drug use.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- It's too late! Timing, timing, timing!

HON. SPEAKER.- Order!

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- The Strategy will see numerous Government agencies, NGOs and civil society and communities collaborate for the effective control and reduction of drugs.

Secondly, Honourable Speaker, Sir, police operations and capability. Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Minister has highlighted that Government is committed to the war against drugs and more importantly, in supporting our law enforcers. The \$800,000 allocated to the Fiji Police Force in the current Budget specifically for anti-drugs operations will ensure that the police step up their efforts. This is

through acquiring effective intelligence, surveillance and conducting more raids on drug producers, suppliers, traffickers and users.

Honourable Speaker, Sir, while the Ministry of Defence is embarking on empowering communities, Government intends to engage corporate entities and our bilateral partners to assist and strengthen scholastics programme for schools with resource materials, public service broadcasts, billboards, awareness materials, such as t-shirts, sports gear, water bottles, bumper stickers, as means of heightening awareness on the destructive effects of hard drugs to school children.

Honourable Speaker, Sir, I believe in technology, and wish to mention that as we speak, the Ministry of Defence is liaising with one of our local universities to design a special Mobile App. as a reporting tool for drugs. It literally means that any member of the public would download this App. and use this medium to report on suspicious activities involving drugs within their communities. This App., Mr. Speaker, Sir, is envisaged to be hosted with the Police for swift response and attendance by Police.

Honourable Speaker, Sir, the Ministry is also organising a roadshow awareness, focussing on methamphetamine for urban schools within Nausori and the Suva corridor. The objective of this roadshow is to intensify our fight against hard drugs and to exert influence to those who are considering trying out for the first time.

Honourable Speaker, Sir, the social media in the recent weeks had portrayed exposure of two young children to methamphetamine, something that is of great concern to parents, teachers and, of course, Government. We have approached our bilateral partners to assist Government in this roadshow by providing videos, interviews of drug addicts, including best practices in Australia, New Zealand and the US, let alone success stories that would allow for second chances to these victims.

Honourable Speaker, Sir, before I conclude, I urge all of us here in this Honourable House to assist Government in combatting drugs. Government values and respects the work that has been carried out within our societies with various communities of Parliament, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), the educationists and the members of our society at large. Thank you, Honourable Speaker, Sir.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Tikoduadua, your right of reply.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- I thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, naturally we are disappointed with the Government's rejection of this motion that was moved in the spirit that we thought that enveloped this Parliament on this single most important issue when the Honourable Defence Minister spoke about it on Wednesday. And given the political machination, we are not surprised that the Honourable Minister who asked for the cooperation of everyone described it as a half-hearted motion. He claimed we have stolen his thunder.

Surely, Honourable Speaker, the Honourable Minister is joking. Honourable Speaker, you, as a former Commander, is next for the Manoeuvre Warfare Theory and, Honourable Speaker, you are an expert in Manoeuvre Warfare Theory.

Honourable Speaker, let me give the Honourable Minister a lecture in Manoeuvre Warfare Theory in how to shape the battle space and I am sure you will be delighted by this, Honourable Speaker.

Honourable Speaker, to add to this about shaping operations, I am glad I did not attend the same Staff College as the Honourable Minister, even though I led a delegation from Australia to go and do work in his Staff College for that matter.

But, Honourable Speaker, I am glad I am not because, Honourable Speaker, let me talk about this drug warfare in terms of shaping operation and Manoeuvre Warfare Theory that the Minister had alluded to earlier, because really, I doubt that none of the Ministers nor the Prime Minister knows how to do shaping operations, let me teach them how to do it.

Honourable Speaker, the Honourable Minister spoke about shaping operations into Government engagement area, he knows that. He is talking about shaping us into his engagement area or in your term, Honourable Speaker, that you would know at your time before they changed the language, it was the “killing ground”, he shaped us into his ....

Well, let me tell you something, Honourable Speaker, let me say this: The Honourable Minister has it all wrong, he has it all wrong. Honourable Speaker, why? We, the most important thing in operations is maintaining the initiative. We have the initiative, we raised it before the House, he reacted today, he reacted today.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Honourable Speaker, I am having my time and they should listen.

(Honourable Member interjects)

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- You are reacting, Honourable Minister. You are asking for our help, you are reacting.

Honourable Speaker, the Honourable Minister is talking about the battle space, let me tell him about the battle space. The drug enemy or the drug opposing force is no longer in your big battle space, Honourable Minister. It is no longer in your dip to shape it, it is no longer in your dip, nor is it in your closed battle space, Honourable Speaker, it is not in his closed battle space. I want to ask the Honourable Minister, do you know where your enemy is right now? The enemy is in his rear battle space, it is at the rear of the space on the drug war.

(Honourable Member interjects)

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Yes, of course, and I am suggesting this because you know why? Because the Honourable Minister and Government have lost the initiative. They do not know what to do, they have lost the initiative.

Honourable Speaker, they do not even have a local counter-attack force to regain the initiative, they do not. They are asking this House and I am going to tell him why he is asking this House. Would you like to know why? Because I want to tell the Government and the Honourable Minister that his capability to fight drugs has depleted, all right. Your plan is vulnerable, Honourable Minister. Your centre of gravity is now exposed. The people of this country are exposed to drugs. The children, the future are exposed to drugs.

Honourable Speaker, the Honourable Minister and the Government need reinforcement to regain the initiative. Honourable Speaker, Government, the Minister and the language he understands, he needs to get a strategic counter-perpetration force. Yes, this is Manoeuvre Theory I am telling you, Honourable Speaker, something you know and the Minister needs to learn.

(Honourable Member interjects)

HON. SPEAKER.- Order!

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Yes, well, you do not. Your local reserve is done.

Honourable Speaker, he needs such strategic reserve to get this enemy out of his rear for him to regain the initiative and, Honourable Speaker, that counter-force, this strategic penetration force that the Minister and the Government need to counter drugs is in this House, it is in this House because you know, why, Honourable Speaker, this House is the Minister's and his capacity to fight drugs throughout. We have capability that we can give him which is why we are responding to this.

Honourable Speaker, the sooner they recognise this, the better because they need to realise that their ability to generate force has actually culminated. They cannot do anything with it without help. They cannot do it by themselves, they need external assistance. They need someone else to get rid of this problem for them and this is the reason why this motion is before the House, Honourable Speaker, and I would like to ask the Government here today - get off your high horse, get off your high horse, realise what is before you.

Honourable Speaker, Mathew Chapter 7, Verse 5 (7:5) says that you "Do not tell your brother to remove the speck in his eyes when there is a log in your own eye", and you cannot see the problem. We are telling you the problem, we are offering a solution and get off your high horse. There has been a lot of talk here this morning, alluding to yesterday.

Honourable Speaker, let me talk about yesterday. Honourable Professor Prasad gave the position of NFP on this matter and what my Honourable *Tauvu* did is deplorable, despicable. I was raised by a single mother, he should not have said that to every woman. But, Honourable Speaker, I tell the Government - get off your high horse, you are the last people to talk on this. The Honourable Prime Minister should be the last person talking about violence against women in this House, he should be the last. You should know what is happening in your own House. You should know!

(Honourable Member interjects)

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- It is hypocritical for this matter. We deplore this act like it is for drugs.

(Honourable Member interjects)

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Member,....

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- No one should be subjected to this. He spoke here yesterday about this side of the House being responsible for all of this. Yes, he did it, yes, he did!

Honourable Speaker, he should be the first person to take responsibility, and you know why, Honourable Speaker, he has been in control.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Member, you are on your Right of Reply.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Yes, Honourable Speaker, they were alluding to it, I am replying to that, and I am moving on, Honourable Speaker.

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Honourable Speaker, a Point of Order. I do not know why he is doing a personal attack on me. If he talked about what is happening, I made a statement here yesterday condemning what Honourable Bulitavu said. You did not say anything, but why the personal attack on me? That is what I want to know?

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. SPEAKER.- Order, order! You have the floor and your point.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Honourable Speaker, I was not being personal on the Honourable Prime Minister.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Yes, you were!

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- No, I was not. Honourable Speaker ...

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Of course, you were.

(Honourable Member interjects)

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Listen to this, the motion is condemning the actions made by the Honourable Bulitavu. He called him "Bulitavu, Bulitavu, condemn Bulitavu, condemn Bulitavu!" This is what I am saying.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Member, you are on your Right of Reply to this motion today.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.-Yes, of course, Honourable Speaker. The debate in the House yesterday because the reason why I am asked, that they should get off their high horse.

I understand they have a problem on their hands, and it is up to them to accept the olive branch that we are now giving to Government. There is a crisis in our country and we all want to help to give a good future for our children who were here yesterday and who are listening and watching us today. Thank you.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- *Vinaka!*

(Acclamation)

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. SPEAKER.- Order, order!

Before we take a vote on this, Honourable Members, I would like to welcome the teachers and students of Burenitu Village School, who are here with us today. You are most welcome.

(Acclamation)

Parliament will now vote, Honourable Members.

Question put.

The Question is:

That Parliament urgently appoints a Special Parliamentary Committee under Standing Orders 129 to holistically look into the multi-faceted risks of hard drugs situation in Fiji.

Does any Member oppose the motion?

(Chorus of 'Ayes' and 'Nays')

Votes cast:

Ayes	:	20
Nays	:	27
Not Voted	:	4

MR. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, the results of the vote: there being 20 Ayes, 27 Nays, 4 Not Voted, the motion is therefore defeated.

## QUESTIONS

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, we move on to the first Oral Question for today. I give the floor to the Honourable Simione Rasova to ask his question. You have the floor, Sir.

### Oral Questions

Update on Status of Improving Jetties in Fiji  
(Question No. 182/2019)

HON. S.R. RASOVA asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the Honourable Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Disaster Management and Meteorological Services update Parliament on the status of improving jetties in Fiji?

HON. J. USAMATE (Honourable Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Disaster Management and Meteorological Services).- Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir, and I thank the Honourable Rasova for his question.

We have been undertaking repairs to the jetties in the past, as well as this year, the previous years, and for the next 12 months, the Fiji Roads Authority will be focusing on the most busiest jetties and those that require most work. These include the immediate improvement works at Natovi and Nabouwalu to provide improved access, improved waiting facilities and street-lighting, looking at carrying out repairs in Savusavu to provide safe docking for the rural vessels and then also the investigation and detailed design work for Koro, Makogai, Moala, Nabukeru, Wainiyabia in Vunisea. These are some of the urgent improvements that will be undertaken.

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Minister. A supplementary question.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Can the Honourable Minister, please, explain or clarify the problem in Savusavu where they engaged a contractor and then later wrote to them to say this is unusable. Why can you not engage a person that can do the job, wasting, I estimate more than \$300,000 of public money?

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. J. USAMATE.- Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir. I did not get the full gist of the question by the Honourable Nawaikula. But, for Savusavu ....

(Honourable Member interjects)

HON. J. USAMATE.- Would you like me to answer or would you like to keep on talking, maybe he can answer his own question.

(Honourable Member interjects)

HON. SPEAKER.- Order, order!

HON. J. USAMATE.- He probably has his own answer. The Honourable Member keeps telling us that we do not do our job. The job of Parliamentarians is to talk about the truth, he talks about moral decay in this House.

(Honourable Member interjects)

HON. J. USAMATE.- You create moral decay when one of your Members of your House says something that is wrong, and you keep quiet.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. SPEAKER.- Order, order!

HON. J. USAMATE.- People in this country expect us to have guts and speak the truth. If someone says something that is wrong, you have the gumption to stand up and talk about it and not just say, "People do not do that, people cannot do their jobs." The job of parliamentarians is to speak the truth.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. J. USAMATE.- Stop saying those kinds of words.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister, take a seat. Do not carry on a conversation between you two. I have warned you about that in the past, speak to what is being debated and that is what we do. Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. J. USAMATE.- As I mentioned, Mr. Speaker, Sir, Savusavu is one of the ports that we know has been under particular stress. There needs to be a lot of work, I mentioned also in my reply to the first question that there is a focus on urgent repairs in Savusavu to provide safe docking for the roll on roll off vessels, and that is something that the FRA is focusing on.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Explain the problem, you did not.

HON. SPEAKER.- We move on to the next question: the second Oral Question for today, the Honourable Joseph Nand to ask Question No. 183/2019. You have the floor.

Update on RISE Programme  
(Question No. 183/2019)

HON. J.N. NAND asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the Honourable Minister for Industry, Trade, Tourism, Local Government, Housing and Community Development update Parliament on the Revitalising Informal Settlements and their Environment (RISE) Programme.

HON. P.D. KUMAR (Minister for Industry, Trade, Tourism, Local Government, Housing and Community Development).- Mr. Speaker, Sir, I thank the Honourable Member for his question. The Revitalising Informal Settlements and their Environment (RISE) Programme is actually an innovative programme that addresses health, environment, water and sanitation in urban informal settlements.

RISE aims to demonstrate a nature-based solution to revitalise informal settlements to deliver sustainable, cost-effective, health and environmental improvement. This particular project was initially started by Monash University and ABD. They have been in the country from 2017 conducting a number of research and they have put up a demonstration project in Tamavua-i-Wai.

The whole idea of this project is to identify settlements which are water-logged and in these settlements, the idea is to provide solution to sanitation, as well as environmental problems faced by the community in that area. So, 12 sites have been identified and the demonstration project, as I mentioned earlier on, is in Tamavua-i-Wai and this particular project was developed through consultation within the community and the various stakeholders, for example, Ministry of Housing, *iTaukei* Trust Board and many other agencies came together to make that decision. So, it is more or less a technology-driven programme for the informal settlement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Minister. I now call on the Honourable Lynda Tabuya to ask the third oral question for today - Question No. 184/2019. You have the floor.

Substance and Drug Abuse in Municipalities  
(Question No. 184/2019)

HON. L.D. TABUYA asked the Government, upon notice:

Would the Honourable Minister for Industry, Trade, Tourism, Local Government, Housing and Community Development inform Parliament what procedures and processes are in place to support the fight against substance and drug abuse in municipalities?

HON. P.D. KUMAR (Minister for Industry, Trade, Tourism, Local Government, Housing and Community Development).- Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir. To support the fight against substance and drug abuse in municipalities, municipal councils work closely with the Fiji Police Force and the Ministry of Health and Medical Services.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the municipal councils use various mechanisms to assist police in its fight against substance and drug abuse. Recently, through the assistance of UN Women, a divisional meeting was organised between municipal market supervisors, Market Vendors Association and Fiji Police Force. The reason for this meeting was in response to concerns raised by the Market Vendors Association on crime-related activities, including substance and drug activities. All 12 councils under Market for Change Project have Crime Prevention Committees formed and the Committees are empowered to promote crime-free municipal markets.

Systems in place to promote the Committee objective is that the Committee meets regularly to discuss crime-free programmes, reports to Police Force any suspected activities and seeks Police Force's participation in regular meetings for information and advice. All 12 municipal councils have police posts adjacent to the municipal markets and after the formation of the Crime Prevention Committees last year, the posts are now actively working around markets on issues of safety and security.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, municipal councils are also installing CCTV cameras in towns and cities. Suva City Council has installed 32 CCTV cameras at the municipal market; 13 CCTV cameras at the Suva Bus Station and 27 cameras at civic building areas.

The Suva City Council has also installed CCTV cameras at My Suva Park. So, Suva City Central Business District has CCTV linked to the Fiji Police Force. For Lautoka, Lautoka City Council has installed 15 CCTV cameras at the municipal market. In addition, like Suva City Council, the municipal market has a police post within the market area for safety and security.

The Nadi Municipal Market now has a police post. The re-developed Namaka Market will have CCTV cameras. Sigatoka Municipal Market has 5 CCTV cameras installed and these are managed by the Market Master. Ba Municipal Market within 3 weeks will have 8 CCTV cameras installed.

The new markets (a new Rakiraki and Laqere Municipal Markets) will have CCTV cameras. This is the stand taken by the Government that whenever we are going developed our new bus stations and municipal markets, CCTV cameras will be part and parcel of that particular project.

The Nausori Municipal Market currently has 5 CCTV cameras and plans are in place to increase the number within these two areas - market and bus-stand facilities. Labasa Town has 11 CCTV cameras installed within the town centre and these are managed by the Fiji Police Force and work is in place to add more CCTV cameras in various towns and cities.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, that is all I have to say.

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Minister. Honourable Lynda Tabuya, you have the floor.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Thank you Honourable Speaker. Thank you, Honourable Minister, for explaining about the CCTV cameras being installed around the cities and towns. I want to direct a question to the business license holders with whom we issue licenses to.

What sort of monitoring mechanism do you have for these business license holders in terms of their activities within their premises? You have mentioned the CCTV cameras outside, what about the activities inside and the possibility of looking at CCTV cameras also for these business license holders within like night clubs, restaurants and exclusive clubs that we have in our municipalities and towns? Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is no way any Municipal Council can put a CCTV camera in the business premises, because the premises is owned by an individual. What we can do is we can put it out in public places, outside on streets to capture that. So that is precisely what we are doing.

In terms of monitoring business licence, obviously, for example, in Lautoka Municipal Market, there were some juice sellers selling cigarettes and drugs. It was the Market Vendors Association that reported the matter and when the Police clarified the matter then they were asked to leave. So that is the only thing we can do because when the licences are given or stalls are given, it is given for a particular purpose for them to sell a particular item. Obviously, as you know, single roll cigarettes and drugs are not part and parcel of the business licence. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

HON. SPEAKER.- We move onto the fourth Oral Question for today.

Current State of Measles in Fiji  
(Question No. 185/2019)

HON. S. ADIMAITOGA asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the Honourable Minister for Health and Medical Services brief Parliament on the current state of measles in Fiji as there is a resurgence of measles in some countries around the world?

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE (Minister for Health and Medical Services).- Thank you very much, Honourable Speaker, and I thank ....

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- A Point of Order. Honourable Speaker, I just want to bring to the attention of the House that I have just been physically assaulted in the Parliament premises by the Honourable Prime Minister. He swore at me, broke my glasses, insulted me and threatened me. Like any Member of this House, I am informing you, Honourable Speaker, and I want it recorded in this House. Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Member, that has got nothing to do with what is going on here at the moment. Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- Thank you, Honourable Speaker. I thank the Honourable Member for that question, because certainly the question brings to the fore something that is globally a problem and that is the problem with measles. We have been very fortunate in Fiji that even though there is a resurgence globally, and there being deaths in countries, especially, and even in some first world countries, we have not to that extent seen it resurge in Fiji.

One of the reasons why there has been no resurgence in Fiji is the fact that we have a measles immunisation that happens at nine months. This has begun in 1982 and also, we had measles supplementary immunisation that happens to our children who are beyond 10 years of age.

In essence, this gives us more than 96 percent to 97 percent immunity within our population and this is called "herd immunity". In first world countries where measles is making a resurgence, it is resurging in clusters in areas in which parents may have chosen not to have measles vaccination and, therefore, measles is making a resurgence in these areas.

I have heard maybe about three or four weeks ago, there was one particular case that was a worry, but this was a person who came from overseas and was picked up by our staff and actually an appropriate examination quarantine was done until that person left again. But at this moment in time, I am glad to be able to say to the public and also to this august House, the measles has not made a resurgence in Fiji, and our collective efforts in terms of immunisation and the fact that we encourage our children to be immunised has given us a herd immunity. Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Minister.

We will move on to the fifth Oral Question for today. I give the floor to the Honourable Viliame Gavoka to ask his question.

Management of International Rugby Meet  
(Question No. 186/2019)

HON. V.R. GAVOKA asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the Honourable Minister for Employment, Productivity, Industrial Relations, Youth and Sports inform Parliament as to the processes and procedures developed to ensure that international rugby meets are managed according to acceptable international standards?

HON. P.K. BALA (Minister for Employment, Productivity, Industrial Relations, Youth and Sports).- Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I also thank the Honourable Member.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, any international rugby match that is hosted in Fiji is co-hosted by the Fiji Rugby Union and the World Rugby. There are specific world rugby hosting requirements that need to be complied with which include field, accommodation, transportation and player-welfare requirements but prior to such matches, Mr. Speaker, Sir, world rugby representatives are here usually in the country to work with the Fiji Rugby Union officials to ensure compliance.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, for the current international matches, the Fiji Rugby Union has confirmed that there are three World Rugby representatives, who are working with the Fiji Rugby Union staff in the hosting of these international matches, and that all rugby hosting requirements are met.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, this is the process followed in all the past international matches held in Fiji and because of the full compliance of all the requirements, World Rugby continues to partner with Fiji Rugby Union to host international matches here in Fiji. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, Honourable Minister.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Honourable Speaker, a supplementary question.

HON. SPEAKER.- A supplementary question, you have the floor.

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- Honourable Speaker, I still beg your indulgence; I think what we have just heard from Honourable Tikoduadua, I think this Parliament needs to be aware. We need to listen to Honourable Tikoduadua.

He has been assaulted by the Honourable Prime Minister of this country. We have certain decorum in this Parliament, in the precincts of Parliament, and just yesterday we talked about condemning violence. And here, is the Prime Minister of a country, assaulting an Honourable Member of Parliament in the Parliament precincts. He has been assaulted, Mr. Speaker. He has lost his glasses, and we have witnesses.

Mr. Speaker, I beg you to say something with respect to what has just happened. And I ask every Member of this Parliament to condemn the action of the Honourable Prime Minister in assaulting an Honourable Member of Parliament.

(Honourable Member interjects)

HON. SPEAKER.- Order! I have heard what you have said. I have made the Ruling before that we are dealing with this agenda item, and we will continue to deal with this agenda item.

HON. J. USAMATE.- A Point of Order. If you have made a Ruling and then ....

HON. SPEAKER.- I have already made the Ruling.

HON. J. USAMATE.- If you have made the Ruling ....

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Gavoka, your supplementary question.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- A supplementary question, Honourable Speaker, the question really came about because of the authorisation for the Crusaders and the Chiefs match was at a very high standard. The one between Maoris and Fiji was in shambles. So, we have two standards here. I bought a premium ticket, when I got up to my seat I was told, "Sit anywhere there." I have paid for premium tickets in Eden Park, Millennium Park and all over the world, and there is protection for my seats, like they did with the Crusaders and the Chiefs' match.

But it appears that any Fiji game is treated in a very casual manner, whereas the Crusaders and the Chiefs were given a different treatment, so that is where I am coming from. Is that a standard that is observed consistently throughout the Ministry?

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister.

HON. P.K. BALA.- Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is a standard. As I have said in my response, any international match that is organised here is in consultation with World Rugby and we do comply. But I have not received any such complaints as of now but if there is such, we will look into it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

HON. SPEAKER.- We will move on to the sixth Oral Question for today. I give the floor to the Honourable Veena Bhatnagar to ask her question. You have the floor, Madam.

24/7 Earthquake and Tsunami Monitoring Operations  
(Question No. 187/2019)

HON. V.K. BHATNAGAR asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the Honourable Minister for Lands and Mineral Resources update Parliament on the implementation of the 24/7 Earthquake and Tsunami Monitoring Operations?

HON. A. SUDHAKAR (Minister for Lands and Mineral Resources).- Thank you, Honourable Speaker, and I thank Honourable Bhatnagar for that question.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that this is a very important area and this is beyond politics. This is about everyone's safety, and I urge the Opposition Members to hear this answer in complete silence, in the same manner as they were completely silent last night.

Honourable Speaker, the Seismology Unit under the Department of Mineral Resources of the Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources, is responsible for the monitoring of earthquake and tsunami activities in Fiji and in the region. The role was vested to the Department due to the geologically-generated nature of earthquakes and tsunamis.

Moreover, Fiji is located along the Ring of Fire where it is highly vulnerable to seismic and volcanic activity. Earthquakes and Tsunamis, as we all know, causes catastrophic damage and loss of life and property, if an alert message from the monitoring is not disseminated accurately, effectively and in time to the people.

Honourable Speaker, the 24/7 Earthquake and Tsunami Monitoring Operation was implemented on 1st April, 2016 to ensure accurate, efficient and effective dissemination of alerts for the safety and security of our nation. Presently, there are three shift rosters of eight hours for a 24-hour period, and each shift has three teams of two staff.

Prior to 2016, the Section only operated during official hours of the week and restricted hours over the weekends from 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. So, when any seismic activity and tsunami occurred outside official hours, the media was not alerted.

Furthermore, the Seismology Section whilst operating on a 24/7 shift basis, uses the Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT) – Libra I Seismic System where satellite communications are used to monitor earthquake, together with other real time tsunami monitoring tools, for example, tide gauges and tide buoys that are currently installed across the Pacific.

Therefore, advancement into the new technological changes was beneficial and much needed since the analogue system is now obsolete, slow and requires more system links for the final data transmission and analysis prior to information dissemination to the public.

Honourable Speaker, Sir, the VSAT Libra 1 System on the other hand, is more advanced whereby all the data transmission is fast and allow all stations to link directly to satellite and direct all these data to the main Observatory and vice versa. Thus, the need for a proactive approach in the 24/7 earthquake and tsunami monitoring to enable the technological advancement and the timely dissemination of accurate emergency response information.

Earthquake is an unpredictable event, compared to other natural disasters. It can occur at any time of the day or night. It is, however, possible to predict the arrival time of tsunamis if generated from an offshore earthquake, particularly those from the region or global sources.

This 24/7 operation will enable the public to be well-informed and prepared for any risks due to timely dissemination of accurate information on possible earthquakes and tsunami events, therefore, reducing significant damages and fatalities in future potential appearances.

Honourable Speaker, in order to build and develop resilient communities, essential early hazard warning for emergency response is crucial. There has been an approved budget of \$600,000 for the Seismology Research Seismic Station System Upgrade, as the current VSAT Seismic Libra System 1 used in Fiji is now outdated and its spare parts are no longer in supply, according to the makers, a nanometric company in Canada.

Due to this concerning reality, the Ministry plans to purchase and install the current advanced version - Libra 2. Without this seismology equipment and system, our local early warning system will not be compatible with the current technological advancement, therefore, will impact the sustainability, efficiency and effective implementation of safety and security for our people from earthquake and tsunami negatively.

Honourable Speaker, according to the Tsunami Response Plan (TRP), Director, National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) has the authority and responsibility of activating the tsunami siren, based on warning released by the Seismology Section at the Mineral Resources Department. Since the Seismology Unit operates on a 24/7 basis and has installed the tsunami siren encoder, the Seismology Unit can activate the siren if there is a tsunami national threat.

This resulted from an arrangement between the parties based on a common understanding of the logistics involved. In addition, these siren systems are only activated while there is a confirmed local tsunami threat by the Seismology Section, whether it be a regional or local tsunami.

The earthquake should be confirmed and verified within the perimeters of a strong to great magnitude earthquake, shallow depth, together with an offshore epicentre location. Tsunami siren system activation will also include, felt destructive effort by the general public which would have been verified by the Seismology Unit of the Mineral Resources Department.

Honourable Speaker, Sir, in strengthening, with supporting seismic data sharing amongst the Pacific Island countries, the Government, through the Ministry has engaged the Oceania Regional Seismic Network (ORSNET), as the base level of tsunami early warning system.

The ORSNET receives local seismic data from seven Pacific Island Countries and integrates them into a server during a network event. Presently, seismic data is shared between seven countries, including Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, New Caledonia, Samoa and Tonga where a regional server has been installed by the Oceania Regional Seismic Network (ORSNET) based in New Caledonia. This is due to the availability of relevant ideas expressed as seismologists.

In having more seismic data, such as are available and centralised in the server, collation, analysis and determination of an earthquake epicentre location, magnitude and depth for each Pacific country is therefore more reliable, efficient and precise. Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Minister.

Honourable Members, we are running out of time, and I will make the ruling now that we carry the next two questions and the written question into the next sitting of Parliament.

We will now move on to the last agenda item for today.

## **END OF WEEK STATEMENTS**

### 2019 UN International Day for Indigenous People

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, before I give the floor to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, I just want to remind Members that a Member may speak up to 10 minutes, with a 10-minute response by the Minister or Ministers responsible for the subject matter of the Member's speech. No seconder is required and there will be no other debate. I call on the Leader of the Opposition, the Honourable Sitiveni Rabuka, to deliver his End of the Week Statement. You have the floor, Sir.

HON. MAJOR-GENERAL (RET'D) S.L. RABUKA.- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to make my End of the Week Statement as the international community and the United Nations celebrate International Day for the World's Indigenous People. I note the restriction on time and I will try and make it shorter.

This statement, Mr. Speaker, Sir, is delivered on behalf of Team SODELPA and Members of the SODELPA family in Fiji and the world, and all indigenous Fijians and indigenous people in the world.

Although I am saddened, I am not disheartened by the political rhetoric of the FijiFirst Government that every time we talk about indigenous rights, we are accused of racism and of being unpatriotic. It is unfortunate that in the last 14 years, Mr. Speaker, Sir, patriotism and the sacrifice by our forefathers and founding fathers of modern Fiji, have been ridiculed and criticised even to gutter level in this august assembly and in a few media outlets.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is important for me to revisit how our society has evolved. Our manifesto, as a party, is not racist. Our manifesto is available to anyone who is interested to have a copy. It is also freely available on our website.

Our manifesto, Mr. Speaker, Sir, has been drawn on the dreams, the visions and the aspirations of our forefathers when they put aside their war clubs and accepted *Lotu* or Christianity. This is also embraced by the founding fathers of modern Fiji and here today, we will continue to do so with the same commitment, compassion and determination.

SODELPA's collective vision, Mr. Speaker, Sir, is to build a secure, peaceful, prosperous and stable nation through inclusive leadership and governance that will foster improved livelihoods, sustainable economic and social development, protection of our environment and reduce vulnerability to the adverse impacts of Climate Change.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the vision was developed recognising that Fiji is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multi-cultural and a multi-lingual nation. We, in Fiji, continue to embrace and commit ourselves to these basic principles as we progress.

As we celebrate International Day for Indigenous People, Mr. Speaker, Sir, we ask the FijiFirst Government and the people of Fiji to reflect on, embrace and recognise the United Nations' Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention 169 on the Rights of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples which Fiji has signed. Do not ask me for anything more or less.

The UN Declaration and the ILO Convention have been harmonised to ensure consistency and clarity. Most importantly, Mr. Speaker, Sir, be affirmed that indigenous rights are human rights.

The UN World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, in 1993, affirmed that, and I quote:

"...human rights are inherent to all human beings. Whatever their nationality, place of birth, residence, sex, national or ethnic origins, colour, religion, language and any other status, we are equally entitled to our human rights without discrimination."

These rights are inter-related, inter-dependent and indivisible, meaning, no human right is more important than another."

By the same token, Mr. Speaker, Sir, indigenous rights must be looked at in the same spirit and context. It is estimated that there are only 370 million indigenous people in the world today, living in about 90 countries.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, they make up less than 5 percent of the world's population but account for 15 percent of the poorest. They speak the overwhelming majority of the world's estimated 7,000 languages and represent 5,000 different cultures.

Indigenous peoples are inheritors and practitioners of unique cultures, the ways of relating to people and the environment. They have retained social, cultural, and political characteristics that are distinct from those of the societies in which they live. Despite these cultural differences, Mr. Speaker, Sir, indigenous people from around the world share common problems related to the protection of their rights as distinct people.

Indigenous peoples have sought recognition of their identities, way of life, their right to traditional lands, territories and natural resources for years, yet throughout history, their rights have been violated. Indigenous peoples today are arguably among the most disadvantaged and vulnerable groups of people in the world. The international community now recognises that special measures are required to protect these rights and maintain their distinct cultures and ways of life of these people.

The Historical Context in Fiji: Archaeological evidence suggests that Fiji has been inhabited initially by Melanesian people for more than 3,500 years. The first known contact with Europeans occurred in 1643 when the islands of Vanua Levu and Taveuni were explored by Abel Tasman. British explorers, including Captain James Cook and William Bligh passed through in the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century. By this time, the population was mixed, with the Melanesians occupying the Eastern areas and Polynesians the areas in the East and some of the Western parts of the main islands.” That is from the Commonwealth Website, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

The transformation of Fijian society continued at a faster rate after the signing of the Deed of Cession in 1874. I say that because the Deed of Cession contains a united and unified forward-looking vision for Fiji.

I believe in that vision articulated by the Chiefs of Fiji in the Deed of Cession; the Chiefs in ceding these islands to her Majesty, Queen Victoria and her Heirs and successors expressed their desire to secure the promotion of Christianity, Good Governance and to increase trade and industry.

These noble aims, Mr. Speaker, Sir, are fundamental and I believe are descriptive of the balancing of interests among the various communities that have made Fiji their home. Based on that vision and the desire to increase trade and industry, there was an influx of migration into Fiji. Between 1879 and 1916, more than 60,000 indentured labourers were brought in from India to work in the sugarcane plantations, followed by Chinese, Indian and European traders.

Again, in the early 1940s, Mr. Speaker, Sir, Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna recognised the need to put in place legislations to protect the rights of iTaukei, particularly, land-owned communities, land owned by community units rather than by individuals. These developments and sequence of events clearly show, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that the iTaukei are the first people to continuously occupy Fiji.

All who have made Fiji their home embrace and recognise the rights of indigenous people without any intention of marginalizing or dispossessing indigenous values and their strong will for self-determination.

Today, Mr. Speaker, Sir, our total population is around 884,887 and 52 percent of that (460,141) are iTaukei and 35 percent (309,771) are Indo-Fijians and other ethnicities account for around 13 percent.

I used the word ‘around’, Mr. Speaker, Sir, because the Government has disallowed the breakdown of census data by ethnicity. They claim that using ethnicity data is racist. All countries in the world who champion human rights: the United States, Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom among others, continue to use ethnicity as a key indicator in collecting census figures whilst the FijiFirst Government considers that “racist”.

The data on ethnicity is important for policy-formulation and to identify specific needs of each ethnic grouping, and rightly the clear indication of the FijiFirst agenda in trying to force assimilation rather than allow our society to evolve naturally over time. We must also recognise the fact of demographic changes in our population, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

In 1986, Mr. Speaker, Sir, our urban population was 38.7 percent, today it is around 60 percent of our population based on the 2017 Census figures. Our rural population has declined ...

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Time's up.

HON. SPEAKER.- I have already given you time to carry on.

HON. MAJOR-GENERAL (RET'D) S.L. RABUKA.- Thank you. However, Mr. Speaker, Sir, the rural population has declined to 44 percent in 2017 from 61.3 percent in 1986, it has dropped.

Therefore, it will be very difficult now, Mr. Speaker, Sir, when we do not have ethnic breakdown in our data to determine the policy mix to address urban migration on targeted assistance to meet the aspirations of specific identified groups.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I believe and I hope we will not sweep under the carpet the rights and aspirations of indigenous Fijians or the *iTaukei*.

If we want long term peace, security and prosperity for all, we must recognise and respect the right to self-determination in the spirit of mutual respect and understanding as stipulated in the United Nations' Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and ILO Convention 169, whereby indigenous rights are inter-related, inter-dependent and indivisible from all other categories.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, over the last 12 years, there have been systematic degradation of the institutions of indigenous people of Fiji.

I have no pleasure in categorically stating that the winds have changed and are now happening very quickly since the 2006 Military *Coup*.

HON. MEMBER.- 1987.

HON. MAJOR-GENERAL (RET'D) S.L. RABUKA.- We have had scholastic or attempted scholastic writings about a "Sunset Clause" to rest totally and eternally the indigenous people who have cultural autonomy in this land.

Today, Mr. Speaker, Sir, we can see with our own eyes that Fiji is lagging behind in socio-economic development while other countries continue to progress.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we must acknowledge and embrace our right to free, prior and informed consent or simply put, "nothing about us without us" and "nothing to be decided about us without asking us".

In our 12 years, Sir, we have witnessed the engineering and the systemic approach of this Government in marginalising the rights of the indigenous *iTaukei*.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have a few more pages but I respect your ruling and I will have this available and I will be reading this again in another forum later today as we celebrate indigenous people, and today as part of my role as the Leader of the SODELPA group in Parliament, to wish all the Great Chiefs of Fiji and the descendants of the Great Chiefs, and the descendants of all those that were brought to these

islands, and the descendants of the indentured labourers, who have come to raise the colony of the nation from one that belong to the tribal chiefs and their indigenous people, we owe it to them. They have come to make us what we are, all we ask is that, "Please, listen to our plight and speech."

(Acclamation)

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his End of the Week Statement and I will now give the floor to the Minister responsible on this side of the House. You have equal time, Honourable Minister.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I speak on behalf of the Honourable Prime Minister who is indisposed at this point in time. Mr. Speaker, Sir, the International Day of the World's Indigenous People has been acknowledged since 1994 when it was first established by the United Nations to promote and protect the rights of the world's indigenous populations. Mr. Speaker, the vast majority of indigenous people have been uprooted often violently from the social fabric of their societies.

The vast majority own next to none of the land historically held by their ancestors. The vast majority exists on the fringes of the society cut out from mainstream life, politics and development. For some, their culture, language and ways of life exist on the very brink of extinction. For others, these aspects of their identities have been lost entirely. When the United Nations first established this national day of celebration, it was for the sake of such people, Mr. Speaker, Sir, people who have endured the trauma of violent exploitation and cultural suppression.

It was for the sake of the Creed, the Cherokee, the Youckey and all the indigenous people of the Americas, who were massacred in genocidal killings, stripped off all their land but they still live excluded from conventional life and society of reserves. It was for the sake of the Aboriginals of Australia who are hunted like animals by colonisers, devastated by diseases and subjected to a range of horrific atrocities which I spoke on previously, Mr. Speaker, Sir, indeed which the Honourable Prime Minister has.

Let us not forget, Mr. Speaker, the Tasmanian Aborigines who were nearly wiped out entirely, in fact they were. The last person alive was Truganini. Today Aboriginal Australians holds no ownership of the vast majority of their lands, their ancestors called their own, and only recently is their nation coming to terms with the historic injustices suffered by that community. Indeed, they were not counted as human beings, they were part of flora and fauna until 1967, or so.

It was for the sake of the indigenous people across Africa, the majority of whom were ruthlessly, ripped from their homelands, massacred, treated as subhuman, subjected into slavery and economically ravaged by foreign powers from the colonial times all the way up to the present day. It was for the sake of all those indigenous people who have watched their culture dismantled, or watched their loved ones being disparaged, raped and murdered and were being pushed from their rightful lands and from the mainstream of the present day societies.

Across Asia as well, the horrors suffered by the indigenous peoples are much the same. Mr. Speaker, Sir, while the *iTaukei* and indigenous people, let us not make the mistake of thinking that the experience in Fiji can or should be equated to the experiences of any of those historically victimised populations. Populations were still languished on the sidelines of the development of their respective countries. For other indigenous people, this annual celebration is one of the few times of the year where they can be themselves and express who they are without fear of being quashed by their disinterest or outright suppression from that large society, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

As said earlier, Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Prime Minister, of course, was going to respond to the question by Honourable Anare Jale. The *iTaukei* live a very different reality. They celebrate our language, culture, history, religion, every day, all year long. Every day in Suva, every day across Tailevu, every day across Lomaiviti, every day at Vanua Levu, every day, everywhere in Fiji is indigenous people's day, and we do not need anyone's permission to be who we are or celebrate the richness of their identities, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

The *iTaukei* people are not victims as some would like to portray. There are people whose destiny is squarely within their own control and the people who are living in a credible era of opportunity. The *iTaukei* people own 92 percent of all the land in Fiji. The level of ownership is unrivalled among indigenous people's resettle of populations and were colonised. And thanks to our Fijian Constitution, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that land can never be sold off or taken away.

That same Constitution, Mr. Speaker, Sir, sets out unprecedented protections of the unique culture and language, irrespective of a student's ethnicity today. Conversational *iTaukei* is now being taught in all schools, everywhere in Fiji, irrespective of who the students are. Therefore, the preservation of the language will continue.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, they are not only served by the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs, but by every other Ministry and Department in Government as they are all mandated to work for the benefit of every Fijian and ensure all of our people have equal access to opportunity. We have people who are proving that our progress does not come at the expense of identities; just the opposite.

Our progress is strengthening, everything that makes us proud to be who we are, and that pride, Mr. Speaker, Sir, is spread both here at home and increasingly on the global stage, where our international leadership has seen powerful showcases of our culture, reached tens of millions of people around the world. Presidents, Prime Ministers and Royalty from around the world have sit from our grog bowls and watched our traditional *meke* dances with more eyes on the unique *iTaukei* heritage than ever before.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, as the Honourable Prime Minister says, "That as an *iTaukei*, will never find me playing the victim, not with such egregious crimes having been committed against other indigenous peoples." As the Honourable Prime Minister says, "I will not be belittled if there is suffering by pretending that we, the *iTaukei* people face threats to our language, our culture or our very lives." He says, "I will not pretend we are a marginalised population. I will not make a mockery out of the international frameworks and institutions created out with the recognition of the suffering of the indigenous peoples by deluding myself into thinking, the same applies to the *iTaukei*."

The Honourable Prime Minister says, "Of course, I am proud of our history, I am proud of our heritage, our way of life, our languages and dialects, but that is not where my pride ends. My pride extends to our historic achievements in protecting and preserving those aspects of our culture for all time. It cannot be taken away, it cannot be erased, it cannot be lost to history."

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would also like to highlight that in February this year, the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs celebrated International Mother-Language Day, followed by the launch at Sukuna Park in May 2019. Mr. Speaker, Sir, today as we speak, there is a panel of discussions being live-streamed to enable guest speakers and indigenous experts to discuss the theme, "*Indigenous Languages in Fiji*" Mr. Speaker, Sir. Consultations have already been held with five provinces; Tailevu, Rewa, Naitasiri, Serua and Namosi as well as the Commissioner, Central Division's Office and his team with the Provincial Council officers.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would also like to highlight that the Honourable Leader of Opposition talked about rights and how it cannot trump over other rights. Mr. Speaker, Sir, let me just point out that in

respect of the assessment of indigenous rights, and as we have said in Parliament previously, the African Commission on Human Rights said after they were confronted with the reality that all Africans, including those in majority groups are indigenous, and therefore in principle likely to ask for special measures and treatments. It has said that in order to benefit from the special treatment requirement, the indigenous should be from our minority culture which is significantly different from the dominant culture of the majority. Any other definition, Mr. Speaker, Sir, would lead to the tyranny of the majority over minority rights under the guise of indigenous rights.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition is completely incorrect to say that every time indigenous rights are spoken about, that we are saying is racist. We are not saying that, Mr. Speaker, Sir. No one from this side of Parliament has ever said, “Whenever the indigenous rights have been spoken about, that it is racist.” It is not racist. Indigenous rights are there and the ILO Convention was ratified.

Honourable Leader of the Opposition was the Prime Minister, some seven years after the ILO Convention came to effect, that is when he ratified it one year just before the 1999 General Elections, perhaps it was an Election gimmick, Mr. Speaker, Sir. But even in respect of the ILO Convention, only 23 countries have ratified the ILO Convention because of the very nature of the Convention itself and its non-applicability to many of the countries, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the ILO Convention does not describe who is indigenous but it describes who is to be included under its stroke. In the Fijian Constitution itself, Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Preamble specifically recognises the indigenous people of the *iTaukei*, the ownership of the *iTaukei* lands, the unique culture, customs, tradition and language.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, unlike the representation made by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, it is not true. This celebration, Mr. Speaker, Sir, as we have highlighted through this celebration in May of this year and also later on to come in November through songs, speeches and cultural performances as well as storytelling. We acknowledge the great history, teaching, learning and widespread use of the *iTaukei* language today. We had several invited guest speakers to speak on their personal experiences in helping preserve our language and pass it on to the future generations, including one man who shared how his clan had successfully translated and published the *Bible* in his own community’s dialect.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, as the Honourable Prime Minister says, “I found that to be particularly moving because we all know our language is not monolith, it is actually incredibly diverse with some dialects being vastly different from others, that is why we are actually creating spaces where it can give voice to the full range of expressions that compose the *iTaukei* language. This is the type of fine work that is currently being carried out by the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs. Indeed, the cultural mapping programmes have been carried out and which we fund annually, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the celebration again made one thing exceptionally clear that the *iTaukei* people are not marginalised people. Our people need not live in fear of any threats to their culture, their language is very dear in respect to their identities. We can probably celebrate who we are every day, all year around because our position in Fiji is unquestionably secure, our progress is wide-reaching and inclusive and our future shines more brightly than ever before, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, as the Honourable Prime Minister says, “That is why I choose to dedicate my commemoration of this World’s Indigenous People’s Day to those indigenous people who were watched helplessly as their identities have been eroded by the unrelenting discrimination of foreign powers and

sadly the citizens of their own countries. Those people whose land is not their own and who struggled every day simply to be seen and heard by the society. Those people who deserve our attention and the attention with the rest of the global community. We, as the Honourable Prime Minister says, “the indigenous *iTaukei* of Fiji should stand with them in solidarity, recognising just how blessed we are to call this “our home”. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Attorney-General for the statement. Honourable Members, we will move on to the next agenda item.

### ADJOURNMENT

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, I call on the Leader of the Government to move the motion. You have the floor, Sir.

HON. LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT.- Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir. Please, just allow me, before moving the motion, to wish every Fijian a very happy and fruitful UN International Day for Indigenous People and, of course, also wish to convey to John McKee and the Team Flying Fijians, our well wishes for tomorrow’s game against Samoa and, of course, their preparations for the World Cup and tomorrow is also Secondary School’s rugby. We wish all teams playing in the final all the very best, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

Anyway, the Deans is going down to Tailevu.

(Laughter)

HON. LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, I move:

That Parliament adjourns until Monday, 2nd September, 2019 at 9.30 a.m.

HON. A.A. MAHARAJ.- Thank you, Honourable Speaker, Sir. I beg to second the motion.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, Parliament will now vote on the motion. The Question is:

That Parliament adjourns until Monday, 2nd September, 2019 at 9.30 a.m.

Does any Member oppose the motion?

(Chorus of ‘Nays’)

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, since no Member opposes the motion, the motion is agreed to.

Honourable Members, at this juncture, I sincerely thank all Honourable Members for your participation and contribution during the Parliamentary proceedings in the course of this Sitting period.

## **SPEAKER'S RULING**

### A Point of Order by Hon. Lt. Col. P. Tikoduadua

Honourable Members, as you had noticed, a Point of Order was raised by the Honourable Pio Tikoduadua and then later on, the Leader of the National Federation Party raised another Point of Order. I had already made my ruling.

Now, the rulings of the Speaker are based on what he sees and what he hears. You would have noticed that when the debate is going on, I am leaning forward trying to hear what you are saying. I cannot make a ruling if I have not witnessed anything. That is why the normal procedure should happen that the Honourable Pio Tikoduadua puts in a report to whatever authorities he thinks the report should go to; that is the normal procedure. So I hope I have made myself clear on that point.

Finally, Honourable Members, with just three weeks to our next Sitting and these anticipated to be demanding weeks, I remind the Honourable Whips not to lose track of the necessary preparations for the next Sitting. Thank you and I invite all Honourable Members to lunch, which is being served in the Big Committee Room.

Honourable Members, before we adjourn, there was a point raised yesterday about the next Sitting. I will not answer to that until the next Sitting starts. Now, you are all wondering who raised that point but it was raised with me.

Honourable Members, I declare the Parliament adjourned until Monday, 2nd September, 2019 at 9.30 a.m.

The Parliament adjourned at 12.37 p.m.