



PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI

MINUTES

of Proceedings of Parliament at Suva on Friday, Seventeenth day of February, 2023

1. The House met at 9.30 a.m. pursuant to adjournment.

2. Hon. Speaker took the Chair and read the Prayer.

3. MEMBERS PRESENT

All Honourable Members were present except for the Hon. Josaia Bainimarama.

[Virtual attendance: Hon. Prof. Biman Prasad and Hon. Aseri Radrodro.]

4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The Leader of the Government in Parliament the Hon. Lynda Tabuya moved that the Minutes of the sitting of Parliament held on Thursday, 16 February 2023, as previously circulated be taken as read and be confirmed.

Motion seconded.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

5. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR

Hon. Speaker welcomed all Honourable Members to the sitting of Parliament. He also welcomed those in the gallery and all those watching the live broadcast and the live-streaming of the proceedings from home, offices and electronic devices.

Hon. Speaker informed all Honourable Members that the Privileges Committee would continue with its deliberation and therefore, will await further notification from the Chairperson.

Hon. Speaker also informed all Honourable Members that the *Hansard* reports for Thursday's sitting would be circulated later in the day.

6. PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND CERTAIN DOCUMENTS

The following reports were tabled and referred accordingly to the relevant Standing Committees –

(a) Standing Committee on Social Affairs

- (i) Fiji National Provident Fund – Annual Report 2022;
- (ii) National Fire Authority – Annual Report for the 7 Months Period Ended 31 July 2016;
- (iii) Levuka Town Council – Annual Report 2014;
- (iv) Levuka Town Council – Annual Report 2015; and
- (v) Fiji National Sports Commission – Annual Report August 2020-July 2021.

(b) Standing Committee on Natural Resources

- (i) Ministry of Fisheries – Annual Report 2019-2020;
- (ii) Ministry of Fisheries – Annual Report 2020-2021; and
- (iii) Ministry of Forestry – 2020-2021 Annual Report.

(c) Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human rights

- (i) Fiji Corrections Services – 2018-2019 Annual Report; and
- (ii) Fiji Corrections Services – 2019-2020 Annual Report.

Hon. Speaker informed Honourable Members that the following papers were for information only and would not be referred to any Standing Committee –

- (i) Fourth Quarter Appropriation Statement – Actual Expenditure From 1 May 2022 – 31 July 2022;
- (ii) First Quarter Appropriation Statement – Actual Expenditure from 1 August 2022 – 31 October 2022; and
- (iii) Medium Term Fiscal Strategy – 2024-2026.

7. RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON THE MOTION BY THE HONOURABLE PRIME MINISTER

Parliament resumed debate on the motion that the Parliament thanks His Excellency the President for his most gracious speech.

Debate ensued.

[Speakers: Hon. Tomasi Tunabuna, Hon. Agni Singh, Hon. Siromi Turaga, Hon. Dr Ifereimi Waqainabete, Hon. Iliesa Vanawalu, Hon. Naisa Tuinaceva, Hon. Ifereimi Vasu, Hon. Jovesa Vocea, Hon. Filimoni Vosarogo, Hon. Jone Usamate, Hon. Inia Seruiratu and Hon. Sitiveni Rabuka (right of reply).]

8. PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE REPORT

Pursuant to the Communication from the Chair on Wednesday, 15 February 2023, and pursuant to Standing Order 127(2)(d), the Chairperson of the Privileges Committee the Hon. Lenora Qereqeretabua, tabled the report of the Privileges Committee on a matter of privilege against the Leader of the Opposition the Hon. Josaia Bainimarama.

Pursuant to the Communication from the Chair on Wednesday, 15 February 2023, and pursuant to Standing Order 127(2)(d), the Chairperson of the Privileges Committee the Hon. Lenora Qereqeretabua, moved a motion that a debate on the content of the report and the recommended sanctions would be initiated on the same day.

Motion seconded.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

9. MOTION ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE

The Leader of the Government in Parliament the Hon. Lynda Tabuya moved that after having received the Report of the Privileges Committee, that –

- (a) That Hon. Josaia Bainimarama be suspended from Parliament for 3 years effective immediately, to be served till 17 February 2026;
- (b) that the Hon. Josaia Bainimarama issue a written apology to His Excellency the President within 14 days from today (17 February 2023);
- (c) that the Hon. Josaia Bainimarama issue an apology to the public within 48 hours from today (17 February 2023);
- (d) that during the period of suspension, Hon. Josaia Bainimarama is not allowed to enter the Parliamentary precincts;
- (e) that if the Hon. Josaia Bainimarama fails to comply, necessary enforcement measures must be imposed to ensure compliance.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

The Hon. Lynda Tabuya moved pursuant to Standing Order 104, the following Amendment Motion –

- (a) that Hon. Josaia Bainimarama be suspended from Parliament for 18 months effective immediately, to be served till 17 August 2024;
- (b) that the Hon. Josaia Bainimarama issue a written apology to His Excellency, the President within 14 days from today (17 February 2023);

- (c) that the Hon. Josaia Bainimarama issue an apology to the public within 48 hours from today (17 February 2023);
- (d) that during the period of suspension, Hon. Josaia Bainimarama is not allowed to enter the Parliamentary precincts; and
- (e) that if the Hon. Josaia Bainimarama fails to apologise as outlined in (c) and (d) above, that the penalty is 3 years.

Amendment Motion seconded.

Amendment Motion debated.

The Leader of Government in Parliament the Hon. Lynda Tabuya delivered the right of reply, and also pursuant to Standing Order 108 withdrew her Amendment Motion. In accordance with Standing Order 108(2), the Amendment Motion was withdrawn and the question was put on the Original Motion.

Question put on the Original Motion.

Votes cast –			
Yes	–		27
No	–		24
Not Voted	–		4

The Original Motion was agreed to.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The Leader of the Government in Parliament the Hon. Lynda Tabuya moved that Parliament stands adjourned until Monday, 27 March 2023 at 9.30 a.m.

Motion seconded.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

Hon. Speaker thanked all Honourable Members for their contributions during the sitting week, and declared Parliament adjourned until Monday, 27 March 2023 at 9.30 a.m.

Parliament adjourned at 11.12 p.m.

Speaker of Parliament

Secretary-General to Parliament

17th February, 2023.