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## **STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE, LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

**Consolidated Review Report of the Fiji Corrections Service Annual Report  
2018-2019 and 2019-2020.**



**PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI**  
**Parliamentary Paper No. 150 of 2023**

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*22 November 2023*

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## **ACRONYM**

CC	Correction Centre
CCTV	Closed Circuit Television
FCS	Fiji Corrections Service
FETRAS	Fiji Ex-Prisoners Training and Rehabilitation Associate Services
JEE	Job Evaluation Exercise
OHS	Occupational Health and Safety
OAG	Office of the Auditor-General

# CONTENTS

	<b><u>Page</u></b>
<b>CHAIRPERSON'S FOREWORD</b>	4
<b>COMMITTEE REMIT AND MEMBERS</b>	6
<b>COMMITTEE SECRETARIAT</b>	7
<b>1.0 INTRODUCTION</b>	8
<b>1.1 Procedure and Program</b>	8
<b>1.2 Fiji Corrections Services</b>	9
<b>2.0 DELIBERATION AND FINDINGS BY THE COMMITTEE</b>	10
<b>2.1 Initial deliberation by the Committee</b>	10
<b>2.2 Evidence received via discussions with the Stakeholders and Submittees</b>	10
<b>Fiji Corrections Service (FCS)</b>	11
<b>Fiji Ex-Prisoners Training and Rehabilitation Associate Services (FETRAS)</b>	14
<b>Committee site visitation to the Correction Centres around Fiji</b>	15
<b>2.3 Sustainable Development Goals impact analysis</b>	19
<b>2.4 Key Findings</b>	19
<b>3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	20
<b>4.0 CONCLUSION</b>	20

## CHAIRPERSON'S FOREWORD

The Fiji Corrections Service is governed by the *Constitution of the Republic of Fiji* and the *Corrections Service Act 2006*. The Service reports to the Ministry of Justice. The Fiji Corrections Service is obligated under the *Corrections Service Act* to serve the public by keeping in custody those convicted by the courts in providing effective corrective and rehabilitation services, whilst applying all relevant human rights obligations and standards.

This Report captures the review findings and recommendations of the Committee in respect to the pertinent issues noted from the contents of the *Fiji Corrections Service 2018-2019* and *Fiji Corrections Service 2019-2020 Annual Report*.

For the review, the Committee conducted extensive deliberation on the Annual Reports, whereby issues were identified and correspondences regarding these issues were made with the Fiji Corrections Services and its representatives.

Some of the main areas of discussion addressed in this Report are as follows:

- The Fiji Corrections Service is committed to reducing the high number of contraband entering correctional facilities.
- The Fiji Corrections Services continues to work towards its responsible target by safely detaining and rehabilitating persons sentenced to imprisonment or placed on remand at its correctional centres pending trial by the courts.
- The Fiji Corrections Service has no control over the number of persons incarcerated by the courts and therefore does not have means to minimize overcrowding issues within the correction facility.
- The Fiji Corrections Service has taken humanitarian steps to monitor and provide day care towards inmates of old age. This has subsequently exposed the lack of facilitation for inmates that are at risk with respect to mental and health problems.
- The Fiji National Budget 2022/2023 provided funding for a Job Evaluation Exercise to be conducted for FCS staff with the view to reviewing salaries. The FCS engaged a consultant company - Maxumise Pte Limited to conduct the JEE which was to conclude in early October 2023. The Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Finance now have the responsibility to evaluate and determine its outcome.
- The Committee during its tour of Correction facilities was informed of the land tenure issues at its Levuka facility. The Committee notes that the Fiji Corrections Service has taken steps to protect tenure on the Mataqali land by signing a 99-year lease agreement with Land Owning Unit (*Yavusa Totogo*) beginning 2017.



At the conclusion of the review, the Committee believes that majority of the issues identified in the review have been adequately addressed. The Committee also believes it be prudent to provide the following recommendation for consideration of the Fiji Corrections Services:

- The Committee recommends that upgraded equipment be installed to curb the high number of contraband smuggled into Correction facilities.
- The Committee is of the view that the human dignity of all inmates be respected and recommends that there be separate centres allocated for remand and convicted inmates respectively for Natabua, Vaturekuka and Korovou Correction Centres. This would reduce the issue of overcrowding and reduce the negative influence on persons on remand.
- The Committee recommends that there be a specialized area to confine offenders identified as having mental health and drug issues.
- The Committee recommends that the Corrections Infirmary facilities be improved and better resourced. Furthermore, those facilities without infirmaries be furnished with one as soon as possible.
- The Committee recommends that all the corrections food preparation and storage facilities including kitchen and dining halls be revamped to OHS compliant status.

I would like to acknowledge the Honourable Members of the Justice, Law and Human Rights Committee, Hon. Iliesa Vanawalu (*Deputy Chairperson*), Hon. Mosese Bulitavu, Hon. Lenora Qereqeretabua and Hon. Faiyaz Koya, for their deliberations and input and the secretariat for their support. Also acknowledging the representatives of Fiji Corrections Services who made themselves available to make submissions, which assisted the Committee in its work.



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**Hon. Ratu Rakuira Vakalalabure**  
**Chairperson**

## COMMITTEE REMIT AND MEMBERS

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The Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights ('Committee') is established under Section 70 of the *Constitution of the Republic of Fiji* and Standing Order 109 of the *Standing Orders of the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji*. The Committee's mandate and functions are provided under Standing Order 109 (2) and 110 (1) (a)-(d) & (f). The Committee consists of the following Members:



**Hon. Ratu Rakuira Vakalalabure**  
(Chairperson)



**Hon. Iliesa Vanawalu**  
(Deputy Chairperson)



**Hon. Mosese Bulitavu**  
(Member)



**Hon. Lenora Qereqeretabua**  
(Member)



**Hon. Faiyaz Koya**  
(Member)

## COMMITTEE SECRETARIAT

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### Staff

- Mr. Jackson Cakacaka – Senior Committee Clerk
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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights was referred the *Fiji Corrections Services Annual Report 2018-2019 and the Fiji Corrections Service Annual Report 2019-2020* on 17 February 2023, pursuant to Standing Order 38 (2) of the Standing Orders of the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji. The Committee was mandated to review the Annual Report and table its finding back to Parliament.

### 1.1 Procedure and Program

The Committee began its review of the Annual Report on 12 April 2023. The review process adopted by the Committee was agreed upon through consensus by the Members and a summary of this is as follows.

#### i) Initial Analysis of the Annual Report

The Committee began with an initial reading of the Annual Report and had discussions on matters that were noted by individual Members. From these discussions, a variety of issues were identified, which the Committee resolved needed clarification and further discussions.

#### ii) Identification of mode of public consultation

The Committee then discussed, which mode of public consultation would be suitable for the review. The Committee resolved to rely on one main mode of public consultation, which is to invite the Fiji Corrections Service ('FCS') to appear before the Committee in-person and provide a submission on the Report. Despite the initial source of submission, the Committee believed that it be prudent to have a balanced perception on FCS by receiving other related submission from the public. Therefore, pursuant to SO 111, the list of submission were as follows;

- (a) The Fiji Corrections Service appeared before the Committee on Wednesday 26 April 2023 and was represented by the following officials.
  - Acting Commissioner of Corrections – Ms. Salote Panapasa
  - Legal Officer - Mr. Aisea Vucago
  - Senior Accounts Officer – Ms. Helen Koi,
  - Director Rehabilitation – Mr. Waisale Soqonakalou; and
  - Staff Officer Project – Mr. Tomasi Kubunavanua.
- (b) The Fiji Ex-Prisoners Training and Rehabilitation Associate Services appeared before the Committee on Wednesday 10 May 2023 and was represented by Mr. Kaliopate Toka.

#### iii) Discussions with the Fiji Corrections Service – Meeting Open to the Public

The Committee was committed to upholding the public's trust in Parliament and to also meet its obligation under the Standing Orders of Parliament, by ensuring that there is public participation. The Committee ensured that its meetings were open to the public and the media, except during such deliberations and discussions to develop and finalise the Committee's observations and this Report.

The Committee endeavoured to conduct its meeting with the Fiji Corrections Service via verbal submissions and the discussion were open to the public and the media and also recorded for subsequent reference.



iv) Review of evidence collected and seeking clarification on pertinent issues

The Committee reviewed all the evidence collected from interviewing the Fiji Corrections Service ('FCS'). To maintain due diligence, the Committee had further discussions and sought clarification via email.

v) Conducting Site Visit to the Correction Centres

The Committee attempted to verify all evidence received from the Fiji Corrections Services by visiting all Corrections facilities in Fiji with the approval of the Hon. Speaker. The Committee was able to obtain substantive information which forms part of the key findings and recommendations in this report. Table 1 lists the sites visited by the Committee.

Table 1.

No.	Date	Correction Centre
1.	Wednesday 31 May, 2023	Taveuni Correction Centre, Cakaudrove
2.	Thursday 1 June, 2023	Vaturekuka Correction Centre, Labasa, Macuata
3.	Friday 2 June, 2023	Levuka Correction Centre, Ovalau, Lomaiviti
4.	Monday 19 June, 2023	Naboro Correction Centre, Southern Division
5.	Tuesday 20 June, 2023	Natabua Correction Centre (Male and Female), Western Division
6.	Wednesday 21 June, 2023	Ba, Tavua and Rakiraki Holding Centre (cane cutting facility)
7.	Monday 26 June, 2023	Korovou (Male and Female Centres), Suva and Nasinu Correction Centres.

vi) Drafting of Committee Report

The final step of the review process was the compilation of all issues identified from the evidence received. This was then deliberated on and the Committee formed its own bi-partisan view on all issues identified. The result is this report.

## 1.2 Fiji Corrections Services

The Fiji Corrections Services is constituted by Section 130 of the *Constitution of the Republic of Fiji (2013)* ('*Constitution*') and mandated to carry out the responsibilities as stated in Section 130(a), (b) and (c).

The Commissioner of the Fiji Corrections Service, with the agreement of the Minister responsible for the Fiji Corrections Service, has the authority to determine all matters pertaining to the employment of all staff in the Fiji Corrections Service, including—

- the terms and conditions of employment;
- the qualification requirements for appointment and the process to be followed for appointment, which must be an open, transparent and competitive selection process based on merit;
- the salaries, benefits and allowances payable, in accordance with its budget as approved by Parliament; and
- the total establishment or the total number of staff that are required to be appointed, in accordance with the budget as approved by Parliament.

## **2.0 DELIBERATION AND FINDINGS BY THE COMMITTEE**

### **2.1 Initial deliberation by the Committee**

The Committee commenced the review through a first reading of the Annual Report, whereby numerous matters were noted, which the Committee deliberated on and believed needed to be discussed further and/or clarified. Some of the preliminary findings by the Committee, at this stage of the review are summarized below.

- (a) The Committee noted that certain aspects of rehabilitation work carried out by the FCS needed further discussion, which included;
  - Reporting mechanism of early released prisoners.
  - Engagement of former prisoners who had successfully undergone rehabilitation programmes to assist inmates in the realization of the successive pathways.
  - The comparison low number of prisoners released under the Early Release Scheme against the total corrections centres established around Fiji.
- (b) The Committee noted that potential investment can be drawn towards the art and craft products designed by prisoners with the Tourism industry.
- (c) The insufficient ratio of serving psychologist per inmate. The FCS clarified that ratio of 1:360 was not sufficient.
- (d) The Committee noted that the available classes offered to inmates as part of the rehabilitation programme and whether certain technologies were accessible to assist inmates during classes.
- (e) Details on the increase revenue collected from the cane cutting for programme for 2018/2019 which amounted to \$83,422.5.
- (f) Furthermore, the Committee queried if there were any considerations for inmates' dietary requirements considering NCDs and underlying health issues.

At the conclusion of the first reading, certain key issues were identified, which were formulated into questions and submitted to the Fiji Corrections Service for clarification.

### **2.2 Evidence received via discussions with the Stakeholders and Submitters**

The next stage of the review saw the Committee have extensive discussions with the Fiji Corrections Services ('FCS') on issues noted from the Annual Report. For the purpose to obtain a better perspective, the Committee also received submissions from certain groups and individuals who were former and current inmates of FCS to provide views and experiences in conjunction with the issues highlighted from the Annual Report. The following is a summary of the response provided by the Fiji Corrections Services to the Committee's queries on the key issues identified and the summary of submissions.



### **Fiji Corrections Service (FCS)**

For the 2018-2019 reported year, there was a query regarding if early release schemes applies to those inmates convicted for less than a year. The Committee was advised that the scheme was applicable to all convicted inmates except for life termers and for those serving less than a year will undergo certain rehabilitation programmes' before they apply for early release. Furthermore, it was noted that the FCS conducts monitoring visit on a fortnightly and monthly basis to inmates who had been temporarily released for job placement along with home visit conducted at their respective residents. Community work supervisors are assigned to assess and report on the daily activity of these inmates to FCS. In respect to the Short-Term Release programme, the Committee also queried the low number of inmates released as compared to the number of inmates incarcerated for the reported year. The FCS advised that the active release of inmates depends solely upon the applications received from the individual inmate and support from the family and community.

The Committee queried if there were other religious/faith-based institutions apart from 'church' that were involved in the Community Outreach programme. The Committee was advised that 'Church' was a targeted group for community outreach programme whereby other religious bodies were also considered when inmates apply for early release. In addition to the rehabilitation programme, the Committee also noted that the Fiji Corrections Service have allowed opportunities for ex-offenders to provide certain capacity assistance through spiritual testimonial programme and mentoring and rehabilitation programme to the current convicted inmates. The FCS had also utilized the Yellow Ribbon platform and employment expo which have successful ex-offenders to share their life stories.

There was also discussion on whether the ratio of psychologists to inmates in FCS were sufficient. The Committee was advised that the ratio was not adequate to cater the number of inmates, given that the ratio currently sits at 1:360. Thus, FCS have engaged other staff and programme providers who had undergone training in counselling that assist psychologist during their daily assessments.

In terms of the revenue collected from cane cutting programmes, the committee queried if there was a standard rate applied to inmates as that of an ordinary farmer and the process on the collection of these funds. The Committee was advised that inmates associated in the 'musudovu' programme were given equal rates in which funds are receipted and deposited into the Prisoners Trust Fund Account. The FCS uses a 60:40 ratio whereby the percentage of the total income is divided in which the first ratio is allocated under the inmate's name and the other is used to purchase necessity items for inmates during the cane cutting season. i.e. farming tools, rations, and bedding materials. Eventually, the funds collected will be released upon issuance of receipts once inmates have served their sentence and discharged from prison.

The Committee also queried the formula used to determine the 60:40 ratio disbursement and the specific management of the Prisoners Trust Fund Account. The Committee was advised that the FCS acts on its Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) in which the ratio applies to two prisoners trust accounts only – the Sugarcane funds and the Art Gallery fund. Revenue earned from Art Gallery, 60 percent goes to the inmate and 40 percent is used to purchase drawing materials ecetera. It was further clarified that the account is managed and maintained by FCS in which funds are only drawn when inmates are discharged. The officer in-charge does the submission to the commissioner on behalf of



the detained inmate requesting for approval for payment detailing the period of his labour, whereby original receipts and timesheet of work are verified with the FMIS system for payments. In case of misplaced of receipts, a declaration is made for inmate before funds are released and at month end, FCS issues a list of beneficiaries to the Ministry of Finance with bank reconciliation accounts.

The Committee queried if a dietician and/or nutritionist informed the food preparations for inmates. Additionally, meals are offered to inmates as per the Commissioners Order No. 8 on the Prisoners Diet that covers balanced meals. Considerations are made for inmates with medical conditions. The Committee was advised that medical examinations are conducted during induction and admission, along with a monthly health audit conducted by the Senior Medical Officers (SMO) and registered nurses.

In regards to work and earnings for inmates, the Committee queried whether the power vested in the overseeing officer was unrestricted given what this could mean for inmates. The Committee was assured that the Fiji Corrections Service is governed by the Commissioner Order 2011 in which prisoners are selected and placed at various fields of expertise by the central Allocation and Classification Board. The allocation is based on the inmate's skills or acquired qualifications and are remunerated based on performance.

The Committee noted the matters identified by the Auditor-General for the 2018-2019 audited financial statements and queried the measures undertaken by FCS to address the issues highlighted in the financial statements. The Committee was advised that the FCS has continued to work with the OAG audit team in addressing issues noted and has also implemented the following:

- The monitoring of personal files (PF) for each inmate ensuring all records and movements with respect to his referrals are recorded.
- Maintaining of Receipts for all money received from inmates, this is recorded and maintained in their PF files.
- Strengthening of Internal Audits conducted by the FCS Compliance unit and during the annual Commissioner's Inspections as stated in the FCS ACP targets.
- Monthly reconciliations and updates to Management.
- Continuous monitoring in HR and Finance Units by Management.
- Continuous reminders to all Command members during the Commanders Conference and Commissioners Parade on a monthly basis.

For the 2019-2020 report, the Committee queried if there were plans in place in meeting the demand for burial spaces, given that the mortality rate in Fiji's populace is beyond the control of the institution. The Committee was advised that the FCS has initiated plans to extend the new burial grounds at the Suva and Nasinu Cemeteries. The FCS clarified that the developed land at the Nasinu Cemetery can accommodate graves for more than 4 years with additional land that is yet to be developed can accommodate 10,000 new burial lots. Additionally, the Committee noted that the Burial Act allows the re-opening of an existing grave twice, exceeding a span of 14 years respectively which would mean



that one burial plot could accommodate a total of three corpses within 28 years. Given the plans set out by the FCS, the Committee was further advised that FCS would propose a government funded project for a crematorium to be constructed at the Nasinu Cemetery. The Fiji Corrections Service was also in the view that family members be encouraged to bury relatives at their respective villages to avoid possible overcrowding in future.

On the subject of inmates cutting cane, the Committee queried how the cane farms were selected. It was advised that the cane farmers needed to write to the Fiji Sugar Corporation (FSC) sector office requesting for harvesting assistance. Applications are vetted and recommended to the Commissioner of Corrections. The Committee was informed that inmates are then released to assist the cane farmers on the condition that field assessment and inspection are conducted by the Deputy Commissioner of Corrections, and that the farms have access to water shelter and proper sanitation.

The Committee queried the structure and curriculum developed for rehabilitation programmes and the inmates selection criteria to attend such programmes. The Committee was advised that the curriculum and programme structure were tailor made to suit inmates of differing levels of education specifically literacy and numeracy. The Committee was further advised that the week one process includes the interview assessment of the inmate, home visit to collate more information and background of the inmate, and the conduct of the Institution Sentence Planning Board (ISPB) meeting comprising of the Corrections Centre Second in Command who presides the meeting, the inmate, the inmate's parents or guardian, spiritual mentor and the Corrections Centre's psychologist or counsellor. The process helps determine the root cause of the crime committed which match the relevant programme to address the prisoner's offending behaviour.

There was also discussion on the significant number of contrabands entering the corrections center despite the introduction of Cell senses machines by FCS. The Committee was informed that majority of the contrabands are hidden through inmates' body cavities which it cannot be detected by body scanning machines. The Committee was also informed that the FCS has recommended X-ray machines be purchased and installed to curb contraband incidents as well as eradicating possible collusion amongst serving officers with inmates.

The Committee queried on the limited number of applications for the Poverty Alleviation Program that were approved for the period 2019-2020. The Committee was advised that the number of applications approved solely depends on the interested applicants along with the support of family and the community. It was also noted that the cause of low number of applicants received was COVID-19 movement restrictions which hindered FCS's feasibility studies and home visits.

On the subject of the type of work done by inmates when released for community work, the Committee was advised that this involved general cleanup of surrounding areas, general repairs and maintenance of buildings, village obligations such as cleaning of cemeteries and any other works required by the village headman. However, the FCS reiterated that the community work that are carried out are done to benefit the community holistically and not an individual person.

Discussion also surrounds the treatment of inmates in compliance to international laws that Fiji is bound to. The Committee was advised that the Correction Service complies to certain rules such as the Bangkok Rules, Mandela Rules and the UN Minimum Standard Rules for the treatment of Offenders and are reflected in its Policies and Standing Operating Procedures. The Committee was also advised that the FCS has implemented a provision in compliance to the Bangkok Rules in which it has established a nursery room in the women's correction centre that accommodate inmate's children below the age of 6 years.

The Committee queried the measures taken to prevent serious injuries sustained by inmates that may lead to death, whilst in prison. The Committee was advised that the FCS has recruited 2 medical doctors, 11 registered nurses and 15 medical orderlies that are assigned on standby including weekends to monitor and provide medical attention on emergency situation occurred within the precinct of correction. Additionally, it was noted that ambulance vehicles are allocated to all divisions and operate under the supervision of the Divisional Supervisor and Senior Medical Officer.

Discussion was carried out on the number of convicted inmates that were released for 2019/20 and were entitled for payment from the Prisoners Cash Trust Fund Account. The Committee was advised that a total of 138 inmates were released in the reported year comprising a total of \$138, 395.16 were released as per inmates entitlement.

Furthermore, the Committee had identified that there was no information regarding Juvenile inmates recorded for the two reported years and queried the Fiji Corrections Service on the matter. The Committee was advised that the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation was responsible for Juveniles meaning anyone below the age of 18.

### **Fiji Ex-Prisoners Training and Rehabilitation Associate Services (FETRAS)**

#### **Early release**

FETRAS was of the view that the decision not to grant early release to life termers were unfair and that it would need re-assessment. The association therefore suggest that there be an independent impartial board to be established outside FCS to deal with such grievances.

#### **Reporting Mechanism and Visit Opportunity**

FETRAS advised that it was uncertain whether FCS had conducted visitation to released offenders as part of its rehabilitation scheme given that most members of the association including the representative had not been visited recently.

#### **Number of Inmates**

FETRAS was of the view that short term released for prisoners was at the discretion of the Commissioner and that prisoners have no right to question the decisions made. Therefore, FETRAS believes that the one-way decision would be a reason that a smaller number of prisoners were recorded to be released in 2018-2019 annual report.



### **Inmates Access to IT Technologies**

FETRAS advised that prisoners were denied access to certain materials to assist them with their legal presentation before trial.

### **Sugar Cane Cutting Rate**

FETRAS suggested that inmates could be offered a rate payment of \$4 equivalent to those ordinary farmers or sugarcane growers and that FNPF could be also deducted as part of its employment opportunities.

### **Committee site visits to the Corrections facilities**

The Committee visited correction facilities around the country and was informed of the following issues and challenges hindering the operations of the Fiji Corrections Service. The majority of these issues were raised during the visits and these are as follows;

#### **Rise in Smuggling of Contrabands**

The Committee was informed that the smuggling of contraband remains an ongoing issue for all correction facilities. In the absence of high-tech equipment, the Fiji Corrections Service have resorted to stringent measures such as physical check-ups, body-mirror checks, metal detector scanners, body scanners and the use of K9 dogs. However, certain localities of the correction facilities such as Taveuni, Natabua and Korovou have been a contributing factor to the high number of seized contraband, given the easy accessibility of the location to the public.

#### **Overcrowding of prison cells**

The Natabua Correction Centre that has a capacity to hold 166 inmates is accommodating 546 inmates while Korovou CC that can hold 224 inmates currently has 853 inmates. The Vaturekuka CC receiving cell block consists of the 18 rooms which accommodate two serving inmates per room. The status stands at 126 inmates with a minimum of 10 inmates per room. The Committee notes the public health risks that the overcrowding situation presents which would lead to the prevalence of communicable and chronic diseases, mental illness, substance misuse, violence, self-harm and eventually suicide. The Committee was informed that there were plans to continue construction of a new correction centre in Suva which is designed to cater for a new 600 prison capacity, however a pending solution for Natabua and Vaturekuka Correction centre.

#### **The rehabilitation program needs to be revamped and redesigned**

The Rehabilitation Policy was established to focus on the offenders. The framework has been put together to establish the best application and sustainable rehabilitation approach that will continue to effectively address recidivism and re-offending. Inmates have indicated that there is a need to review the Rehabilitation Program to allow for a more friendly program that would consider integrating short visits as part of rehabilitation and treatment of offenders.

**Demarcation of responsibilities of offenders with mental history and aged inmates that are medically and physically unfit**

The Committee noted that there is no clear legislation to demarcate the responsibilities to supervise offenders that are mentally disabled and old aged inmates that are medically and physically unfit to be imprisoned. This is a high risk as officers are not trained nor equipped to treat offenders with such cases.

**Absence of a well-dedicated Health Facility particularly made for inmates**

Given the short staff issue experienced by FCS, having a standalone and well-dedicated Health Facility built within the FCS compound would address the issue and the risk of transporting offenders to and from FCS to public hospitals.

**No digitization or back-up of database (personal records of inmates) and recorded CCTV**

The Committee was informed that all personal files are kept and stored physically and that all recorded CCTVs are deleted every three months without any backup. The Committee is of the view that the back-up poses a concern should there be incidents or emergencies requiring the submission of records or evidence, the FCS would not have any contingency plans in place to retrieve records or data that are more than three months old.

**Absence of legislation to address the growing number of remanded offenders**

A major challenge faced by FCS is to deal with the growing numbers of remanded offenders who are mentally and physically unfit to be imprisoned. The Committee believes that Prison officers are not trained nor specialized in these areas of assistance and as such, it poses a risk to the well beings of inmates.

**Welfare and Well-being of Prison Officers**

*a. Exposure of Prison Officers to High Risk Working Environment*

- The prison officer is an employee who performs a public service of high risk and importance for safeguarding the civil society. Correction Officers perform medium complexity activities that involve planning, organizing and executing services of surveillance, custody and security of offenders in prisons, and they also run programs and actions of support to criminal treatment for their rehabilitation.
- Such activities covers the escort, discipline and security of prisoners; screening and verification of entry and exit of people and vehicles entering the prison vicinity, screening of inmates, control and daily count of the prison population in all prison areas; supervision and inspection of prison labor and conduct of inmates, observing the regulations and standards of the prison at all stages of criminal enforcement; carry out actions and procedures of disciplinary infractions. These work-related dangers were noted to be directly connected to the officer's safety and well-being. These dangers may relate to infectious and communicable diseases; the presence of prison gangs, disruptive inmates, contraband and carrying out daily tasks alongside inmates with mental illness. Each of these dangers presents an elevated risk of harm to officers in terms of both physical and mental



health issues. Such activities may involve risk to the physical and mental integrity of the worker, although the law requires that servers work under proper health conditions when developing their functional activities.

*b. Inadequate Officers' Remuneration*

Officers have indicated that their terms and conditions for staff have remained stagnant for the last ten years. Given that there has been substantial increase of salary amongst other law enforcement institutions, it is prudent that given the nature of work of Correctional Officers and the increase in the Cost-of-Living Adjustments, that these officers be given due consideration and be remunerated where needed.

*c. Levuka Correction Centre Land Issue*

The Correction facility is currently situated on a 'Mataqali' land and has not been officially leased since it was established. The Committee noted that delay in the official leasing has caused the FCS to withhold any form of extension of infrastructure within the property as the current situation may pose the risk of the Government property reverting to the 'Mataqali'.

**Photos captured during the site visit.**



**Figure 1:** Taveuni CC - Main Office and Food Storage (Green Container).



**Figure 2:** Taveuni CC - Food storage.



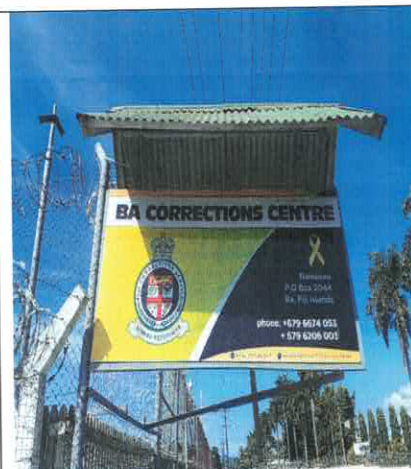
**Figure 3:** Naboro CC - Dog Unit



**Figure 4:** Naboro CC – Discussion with executive staff



**Figure 5:** Naboro CC – Maximum Entrance



**Figure 6:** Ba Correction Centre



**Figure 8:** Ba CC and nearby Govind Park



**Figure 9:** Restricted Contrabands

Written copy of the issues and clarification document is uploaded along with this Report onto the Parliament website: [www.parliament.gov.fj](http://www.parliament.gov.fj).



## 2.3 Sustainable Development Goals impact analysis

As part of its review, the Committee is also mindful of the requirements of the Standing Orders of Parliament whereby all matters before the Committee are to be reviewed through a gender lens. This is supplemented by the Committee's appreciation of the Parliament's role in contributing towards the Global Agenda, which Fiji is also committed to.

For this scrutiny, the Committee's focus is on the goal of having an inclusive work environment and the promotion of gender equality. It was noted that the Annual Report had insufficient information regarding the promotion of gender equality within the workforce, thus had information classifying gender breakdown for both male and female inmates and none for FCS staff.

## 2.4 Key Findings

At the last few stages of the review; after extensive deliberation of all the evidence received and noted from the discussions with the *Fiji Corrections Service*, the Committee has identified a few pertinent findings, which it believes are worth noting and a summary of these is provided as follows:

- i) The Fiji Corrections Service is committed to reducing the high number of contraband entering correctional facilities.
- ii) The Fiji Corrections Services continues to work towards its responsible target by safely detaining and rehabilitating persons sentenced to imprisonment or placed on remand at its correctional center's pending trial by the courts.
- iii) The Fiji Corrections Service has no control over the number of persons incarcerated by the courts and therefore does not have means to minimize overcrowding issues within the correction facility.
- iv) The Fiji Corrections Service has taken humanitarian steps to monitor and provide day care towards inmates of old age. This has subsequently exposed the lack of facilitation for inmates that are at risk with respect to mental and health problems.
- v) The Fiji National Budget 2022/2023 provided funding for a Job Evaluation Exercise to be conducted for FCS staff with the view to reviewing salaries. The FCS engaged a consultant company - Maxumise Pte Limited to conduct the JEE which was to conclude in early October 2023. The Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Finance now have the responsibility to evaluate and determine its outcome.
- vi) The Committee during its tour of Correction facilities was informed of the land tenure issues at its Levuka facility. The Committee notes that the Fiji Corrections Service has taken steps to protect tenure on the Mataqali land by

signing a 99-year lease agreement with Land Owning Unit (*Yavusa Totogo*) beginning 2017.

### 3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

After extensive deliberation, the Committee would like to put forth certain recommendations for consideration by the FCS, which are as follows:

- The Committee recommends that upgraded equipment be installed to curb the high number of contraband smuggled into Correction facilities.
- The Committee is of the view that the human dignity of all inmates be respected and recommends that there be separate centres allocated for remand and convicted inmates respectively for Natabua, Vaturekuka and Korovou Correction Centres. This would reduce the issue of overcrowding and reduce the negative influence on persons on remand.
- The Committee recommends that there be a specialized area to confine offenders identified as having mental health and drug issues.
- The Committee recommends that the Corrections Infirmary facilities be improved and better resourced. Furthermore, those facilities without infirmaries be furnished with one as soon as possible.
- The Committee recommends that all the corrections food preparation and storage facilities including kitchen and dining halls be revamped to OHS compliant status.

### 4.0 CONCLUSION

After reviewing the *Fiji Corrections Service Annual Report 2018-2019* and the *Fiji Corrections Service Annual Report 2019-2020*, the Committee recommends that the House takes note of its contents.


The Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights has fulfilled its mandate approved by Parliament, which is to examine and review the *Fiji Corrections Service Annual Report 2018-2019* and the *Fiji Corrections Service Annual Report 2019-2020* with due diligence.


The Committee's review highlighted numerous findings, which are reflected in this Report. The Committee also put forth a few recommendations for consideration of the House.

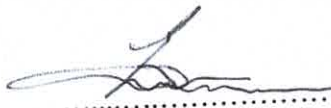
The Committee through this report commends the *Fiji Corrections Service Annual Report 2018-2019* and the *Fiji Corrections Service Annual Report 2019-2020* and the contents of its Report to the Parliament.



**MEMBER'S SIGNATURES**

  
.....  
**Hon. Ratu Rakuita Vakalalabure**  
**(Chairperson)**

  
.....  
**Hon. Iliesa Vanawalu**  
**(Deputy Chairperson)**

  
.....  
**Hon. Lenora Qereqeretabua**  
**(Member)**

  
.....  
**Hon. Faiyaz Koya**  
**(Member)**

  
.....  
**Hon. Mosese Bulitavu**  
**(Member)**

DATE: 21.11.23