



STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE, LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Report on the Review of the Citizenship of Fiji Bill (Bill No. 8 of 2026)



PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI
Parliamentary Paper No. 65 of 2026.

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CHAIRPERSON'S FOREWORD



The Citizenship of Fiji Bill was referred to the Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights scrutinise and to return a report of its findings to Parliament.

The Citizenship of Fiji (Amendment) Bill 2026 (**'Bill'**) seeks to amend the Citizenship of Fiji Act 2009 (**'Act'**) to update the rules for acquiring Fijian citizenship by naturalisation and registration, ensuring the integrity and value of Fijian citizenship, as well as for other technical and related matters.

The Bill modernises Fiji's citizenship framework by updating administrative structures, redefining key terms, and revising pathways to citizenship. It establishes the Ministry of Immigration as the responsible authority and introduces permanent residence and special purpose permits as new categories supporting the acquisition of citizenship other than by birth.

The Bill sets clearer and more consistent requirements for citizenship by registration and naturalisation, linking eligibility to lawful residence and, from 2030 onward, to holding a permanent residence permit. It removes fees for members of the Banaban community, clarifies that temporary permits do not count toward residence requirements, and ensures that pending applications are processed under the provisions of the Act efficiently.

The Bill also streamlines the Act by removing overlapping provisions already covered by the Immigration Act 2003 and prohibiting the delegation of regulation-making powers below ministerial level, while repealing two uncommenced amendment Acts to consolidate the legal framework.

Consideration was also given to the impact of the Bill on Fiji's efforts in meeting its targets of the sustainable development goals (SDG).

I would like to thank the Honourable Members of the Justice, Law and Human Rights Committee for their deliberations and input; Hon. Faiyaz Koya (Deputy Chairperson), Hon. Jone Usamate, Hon. Ratu Josaia Niudamu, Hon. Sachida Nand and Hon. Ratu Isikeli Tuiwailevu.

I, on behalf of the Committee, commend the **Citizenship of Fiji Bill (Bill No. 8 of 2026)** to the Parliament and seek support of all the members of this August house for the Bill.



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HON. RATU RAKUITA VAKALALABURE
CHAIRPERSON

COMMITTEE COMPOSITION

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 consists of the following Members:



Hon. Ratu Rakuita
Vakalalabure
(Chairperson)



Hon. Faiyaz Koya
(Deputy Chairperson)



Hon. Jone Usamate
(Member)



Hon. Sachida Nand
(Member)



Hon. Ratu Isikeli
Tuiwailevu
(Member)



Hon. Ratu Josaia
Niudamu
(Member)

COMMITTEE SECRETARIAT

Supporting the Committee in its work is a group of dedicated Parliament Officers who make-up the Committee Secretariat and are appointed and delegated by the Secretary-General to Parliament pursuant to Standing Order 15 (3)(i). The Secretariat team is made of the following Parliament officers:

- Mr. Jackson Cakacaka – Senior Committee Clerk
- Ms. Alumita Cabealawa – Deputy Committee Clerk
- Mr. Jeke Rokotuiloma – Assistant Committee Clerk

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights, referred to as the ("**Committee**"), was assigned the Citizenship of Fiji Bill 2025 for review on May 2026. The Bill was referred to the Committee in accordance with SO 51(2), which tasked the Committee with the examination of the Bill and the responsibility to report on its findings in a subsequent Parliament Sitting.

1.2 Procedure and Program

The Committee has conducted a thorough review of the Citizenship of Fiji Bill 2025 (Bill No. 8 of 2026). This report outlines the findings, observations, and recommendations of the Committee regarding the Bill.

The Committee examined the Bill in detail, reviewing each clause and engaging in deliberations. Following this, the Committee invited the responsible Ministry to provide a briefing on the objectives and intentions behind the proposed amendments. To ensure transparency and inclusivity, the Committee then opened the process to public participation by calling for submissions from citizens and other stakeholders, which was advertised through Parliament's official social media platforms.

The Committee was mindful of the provisions on Standing Order 111(1)(a) and 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.

1.3 Committee Remit

The Standing Committee on Justice, Law, and Human Rights, in accordance with Standing Order 109 of Parliament's Standing Orders, is tasked with several duties. As outlined in Standing Order 110, these include scrutinizing each Bill referred to it by Parliament and review any subordinate legislation presented in Parliament that falls under its purview.

2.0 CITIZENSHIP OF FIJI BILL (BILL NO. 8 of 2026)

2.1 Introduction

The Bill updates Fiji's citizenship framework by modernising administration, redefining key terms, and revising pathways to citizenship. It makes the Ministry of Immigration the responsible authority, introduces permanent residence and special purpose permits, and sets clearer requirements for citizenship by registration and naturalisation. Eligibility is tied to lawful residence and, from 2030, to permanent residence.

The Bill also waives fees for Banaban community members, excludes temporary permits from residence calculations, ensures pending applications are processed efficiently, removes overlapping provisions covered by the Immigration Act 2003, bars delegation of regulation-making powers below ministerial level, and repeals two uncommenced amendment Acts.

3.0 COMMITTEE'S DELIBERATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE BILL

3.1 Initial Reading of the Bill and Deliberation by the Committee

The Committee had extensive discussions on the provisions of the Bill and resolved that it be prudent to firstly hear the views of the public specifically the stakeholders on this very important proposed legislation.

3.2 Bill Summary

By way of consensus, the Committee agreed that it would be prudent to include the necessary issues that the proposed law intends to address. This would readily give the reader of this Report with the aforementioned information regarding the Bill, which is summarized below;

Clause 1 of the Bill provides for the short title and commencement. If passed by Parliament, the amending legislation will come into force on a date or dates appointed by the Minister by notice in the Gazette.

Clause 2 of the Bill amends section 3 of the Act to provide for the administrative change of the former Department of Immigration to the Ministry of Immigration and to insert new definitions to give effect to the new citizenship framework. These include definitions for permanent residence and special purpose permits, which will be an integral stepping-stone for the acquisition of citizenship other than by birth.

Clause 3 of the Bill amends section 8 of the Act to provide new qualifying criteria for citizenship by registration for a person married to a citizen. An adult who is or has been

married to a citizen may apply for citizenship by registration, and the application must be granted if the applicant satisfies the existing conditions as well as one of the following residence requirements:

- (a) for applications made on or after the commencement of the Citizenship of Fiji (Amendment) Act 2026 but before 1 January 2030, the applicant must have been lawfully present in Fiji for a total of three of the five years immediately preceding the application; or
- (b) for applications made on or after 1 January 2030, the applicant must hold a permanent residence permit and must have been lawfully present in Fiji under that permit for a total of three of the five years immediately before the application.

Clause 4 of the Bill amends section 10 of the Act to clarify the heading of the section and to insert the word “years” after “18”.

Clause 5 of the Bill amends section 11 of the Act to set out the new rules for acquiring citizenship by naturalisation in Fiji. From the commencement of the Citizenship of Fiji (Amendment) Act 2026 until 1 January 2035, a person qualifies for naturalisation if they have lawfully lived in Fiji for a total of eight years within the ten years immediately before applying, are of good character, intend to continue residing in Fiji, and have adequate knowledge of the English language and of the duties and privileges of citizenship.

However, from 1 January 2035 onwards, applicants must also hold a valid permanent residence permit, in addition to meeting the same residence, character, intention, and knowledge requirements. When calculating the qualifying period, only time spent lawfully in Fiji while holding a valid permanent residence permit is counted, and only consecutive periods of such residence are included.

Clause 6 of the Bill amends section 12(2) of the Act to clarify that the payment of the application fee is subject to the transitional arrangement inserted by clause 8.

Clause 7 of the Bill deletes Part 8 of the Act as it is already adequately covered by the Immigration Act 2003, which is the appropriate law for the rules of residence in Fiji.

Clause 8 of the Bill amends the Act to replace the current section 22, which is a spent transitional provision, with a new transitional provision. Upon commencement of the Citizenship of Fiji (Amendment) Act 2026, any pending applications for naturalisation must continue to be processed under the laws that applied before the amendment came into force. In addition, for the first five years after commencement, members of the Banaban community residing in Fiji may apply for naturalisation without being required to pay the prescribed application fee.

Clause 9 of the Bill amends section 23 of the Act to clarify that in calculating the period a person is present in Fiji for the purposes of determining whether the person qualifies for

citizenship, the Minister must not take into account the time spent under a visitor, study, research or training permit, special purpose permit or coextensive residence permit as these are intended to be temporary in nature.

Clause 10 of the Bill amends section 26 of the Act to remove the power to delegate regulation making authority under the Act, as this is not best practice standards. The power to make subsidiary legislation must not be delegated to an operational level.

Clause 11 of the Bill repeals the Citizenship of Fiji (Amendment) Act 2020 and Citizenship of Fiji (Revised Budget Amendment) Act 2022, both of which have not commenced.

3.3 In-depth Analysis of the Clauses of the Bill

The Committee then held extensive discussions on the Clauses of the Bill and noted there were no issues identified for clarification or amendments.

This section summarises how the Bill aligns with Fiji's NDP, which serves as the national framework for localising the SDGs.¹ Some of the key features of the Bill that align with the Pillars in the NDP are illustrated below.

NDP Pillar/Principle	NDP Objective	Relevant Bill Provisions	Explanation
Good Governance (Pillar 3) - Focus Area 7: Committing to Governance, Institutional and State Owned Entity Reforms	Efficiency, transparency, institutional strengthening	Clause 3 – Section 8 (Citizenship by registration – spouses) - Requires lawful presence (3 of 5 years). - From 2030, requires permanent residence permit.	Introduces structured residency requirements, improving regulatory clarity and supporting migration systems tied to long-term economic participation.
People Empowerment - (Pillar 2) – Focus Area 5: Uplifting Socioeconomic Wellbeing.	Inclusivity, rights-based approach, access to services	Clause 8 – Section 22 (Transitional provisions & Banaban community) - Pending applications processed under old rules. - Waiver of fees for Banaban community for 5 years.	Supports inclusivity and protection of minority communities in line with NDP commitment to equitable development and “leaving no one behind.”

¹ Fiji's National Development Plan 2025 – 2029 is available on the Ministry of Finance website: [National Development Plan - Ministry Of Finance](#)

Economic Resilience (Pillar 1) – Focus Area 4: Catalysing Economic Growth and Diversifying the Economy	Labour & investment stability	Clause 3 & Clause 5 (Residency and permanent residence pathway) Progressive shift to permanent residence as prerequisite for citizenship.	Encourages long-term migrants who contribute economically, supporting NDP goals of private sector growth and workforce stability.
Good Governance (Pillar 3) - Focus Area 7: Committing to Governance, Institutional and State Owned Entity Reforms	Efficiency, transparency, institutional strengthening	Clause 5 – Section 11 (Naturalisation requirements) 8 of 10 years lawful residence - Good character, intention to reside - English language + civic knowledge Post-2035 permanent residence requirement	Reinforces rule-based citizenship and promotes civic integration, aligning with NDP goals of social cohesion and accountable governance.

3.4 Submission received via public consultation

There was no submission received from the public in relation to the Citizenship of Fiji Bill 2025.

3.6 Sustainable Development Goals Impact Analysis

Consideration was placed on SDGs 8, 10, and 16, as these goals align with the Bill's focus on the rules for the issue, validity, term, cancellation and return of Fiji Travel Documents and confirms the right of every Fiji citizen to a Fijian Travel-Related Document.

SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth

Immigration laws regulate the movement of workers, including foreign labour, helping ensure fair recruitment, lawful employment, and protection of labour standards. This supports economic growth while reducing exploitation.

SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities

Well-regulated migration policies contribute to safe, orderly, and responsible migration (Target 10.7), ensuring equal treatment under the law and reducing discrimination against migrants.

SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Immigration legislation strengthens governance, border control, compliance mechanisms, and enforcement frameworks. It promotes rule of law, transparency, and accountable institutions in managing migration.

In this regard, the Committee following its review of the Bill, fulfilled its obligation as prescribed under Section 110(2) of the Standing Orders of Parliament.

3.7 Outcome of Review

The outcomes of the review are reflected in the revisions to the Citizenship of Fiji Bill proposed by the Committee to Parliament.

Following extensive deliberation of the Bill, the Committee is satisfied with its current content and therefore recommends no further amendments.

4.0 CONCLUSION

As highlighted in its deliberations, the Committee consulted independent legal experts from the Solicitor-General's Office in addressing clarification that were noted during the review of the Bill.

Following this review, the Committee is satisfied that the current content adequately meets the objectives of the **Citizenship of Fiji Bill 2025**.

The Committee through this report commends the ***Citizenship of Fiji Bill (Bill No. 8 of 2026)*** to the Parliament.

MEMBER'S SIGNATURES



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Hon. Ratu Rakuira Vakalalabure
(Chairperson)



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Hon. Faiyaz Koya
(Deputy Chairperson)



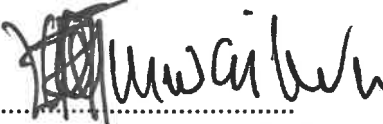
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DATE: 26/05/26