



KHAIYUM ORDERS BURNING OF THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION
Australian and New Zealand must withdraw their support for this dictatorship

First, some history. The Fiji Constitution Commission was set up as a body independent of the current Fiji regime and funded by overseas aid - largely Australia and New Zealand - and its membership was approved by the regime.

Professor Yash Ghai, Chairman of the Constitution Commission, has revealed that the Fiji Police (acting on orders of the Aiyaz Sayed Khaiyum) seized copies of the draft constitution and burned them in his presence. This astonishing act of barbarism was apparently carried out to prevent circulation of the document. As is now usual in such cases the law of unintended consequences has resulted in a much wider distribution of the document over the internet (see it here: <http://www.fjileaks.com>) as the people most affected by the new constitution - the people of Fiji - read it to find out why the regime hates it so much.

The chilling interview of Professor Ghai with Radio Australia and ABC news over his experiences at the hands of the regime is a reminder of just how far Fiji has evolved into a 'rogue state'.

These events have demonstrated that the Yash Ghai Commission, as we have reported before, was simply a screen behind which the regime creates its own 'Constitution' - one which will no doubt be far less palatable to the people of Fiji than the Yash Ghai version - and one which can have no credibility either locally or internationally.

The regime is shortly expected to appoint their favourite legal advisor Nazhat Shameem as Constituent Assembly's chair leading a group of handpicked members to create their version of the Fiji Constitution. It will be interesting to compare this document, when it appears, with the one which was so symbolically burnt.

We suggest that the final result will be a document which has been specifically drafted to control the outcome of the elections in 2014 and provide immunity from prosecution for the perpetrators of the 2006 coup and their assistants. From this latest atrocity we can see that it will ignore the input from the more than 7,000 citizens who made submissions to Yash Ghai.

The paradox here, of course, is that, if the regime and its decrees were as popular with the people of Fiji as they continually claim then they would have no need to worry about immunity.

