

17 December 2011

FIJI'S DICTATOR

Frank Bainimarama's

TRUTH REVEALED

Frank Bainimarama wants the world, and certainly the people of Fiji, to believe that his record is not blood stained, that his motives are noble and that he is nothing but a selfless servant of the higher cause of a pure Fiji. But the actual record of what he said and did (or did not do) tells another story.

His actual narrative is littered with lies, paranoia, betrayals and self aggrandizement, a man escaping from the law, not doing his sworn duty to uphold it.

In Frank Bainimarama's hands, Fiji is on the fast road to rack and ruin.



Executive Summary

The dictator of Fiji is a born liar, and in lying he exceeds in volume and ability any normal person. He has now hired (at very considerable cost to the hapless Fiji taxpayer) a discredited spin doctor, to cover up and embellish his lies.

Frank Bainimarama has told many lies:

- He lied about the date on which he would hold an election
- He lied about lifting restrictions which he has burdened the people of Fiji with for many years
- He is now lying about holding democratic elections in 2014 when he cannot hold such elections without being arrested and charged.

Yet all these lies pall into insignificance compared to the biggest lie which he has spun and continues to spin, and which has been the basis for whatever reluctant international acceptance or forbearance has taken place in regard to his regime.

Adolf Hitler's propaganda Minister Goebbels once stated that the bigger the lie and the more often it is repeated the more likely it is to be accepted. So it is the same with Bainimarama.

The lie in question is that the coup in Fiji in 2000 was planned by persons other than Bainimarama; that he had no prior knowledge of the coup; that he saved Fiji from the coup; and for that his life was threatened by a mutiny, which he suppressed in order to stabilize Fiji. And that he had removed the Qarase Government, via the 2006 Coup, to rid Fiji of corruption.

These lies can now be laid to rest as they are exposed in statements from senior officers and a military Board of Enquiry Report (BOI commissioned by Bainimarama himself, in graphic detail. The BOI report and these other documents and statements reveal Bainimarama's lies and guilt.

As you will see, Bainimarama sought to suppress the BOI report, and anything and anyone who can disclose the truth about what he has done. These persons have either been murdered by him or incarcerated incommunicado in jails where they have now languished for ten years, or otherwise silenced.

The 2000 Coup

Bainimarama was unexpectedly appointed Commander RFMF in February 1999, over the heads of more qualified and senior officers.

The coup deposed the Labour Government of Mahendra Chaudhry on 19 May 2000 with the world being led to believe that it was being carried out by George Speight and his followers.

Extensive rioting and damage occurred. For 56 days Speight held hostages at the Parliament Buildings that included the Prime Minister. Subsequently Speight was deceived into surrendering himself and Bainimarama took full credit for ending the coup and freeing the hostages.

On May 29th Bainimarama carried out a second coup and announced to the nation that he was assuming executive authority from the President and declaring martial law. Then after the conclusion of the George Speight coup he reluctantly ceded civil authority to Laisenia Qarase.

Bainimarama has always represented himself to be the hero of 2000, the person who at that time saved Fiji. The truth is, however, just the opposite.



Bainimarama's Pre Knowledge of the Coup

In the months leading up to the coup Bainimarama received regular military briefings of an impending coup. He was fully aware of the threat to Government. He had also built up intelligence on the impending coup through a military intelligence unit. In addition, soldiers from a specialist unit called the Counter Revolutionary Warfare Unit (CRW), which had been created by Government, and members of the Third Fiji Infantry Battalion (3FIR), were gathering information on the coup and informing Bainimarama.

The sad fate of the CRW soldiers, who were either murdered by or incarcerated or otherwise silenced by Bainimarama, is also outlined in this document.

Despite all the information that Bainimarama had received regarding an impending coup, Bainimarama arranged to attend a conference in Norway in May 2000. This was a United Nations conference on Peacekeeping (the irony of the subject matter of this conference will rapidly become apparent).

Before he was due to leave for the conference, Bainimarama was informed by the Commanding Officer 3FIR, Lt Colonel Viliame Seruvakula, that the coup would be held on 19th May 2000. This warning was given one week before the coup. Bainimarama's response to this warning clearly shows his guilt in the matter of the coup. He said: "OK set you know what to do I have to attend this meeting it is very important for the RFMF."

Bainimarama clearly planned to be out of the country when the coup occurred so that he could avoid blame for it.

Bainimarama's Guilt

Clearly, Bainimarama knew all about the impending coup but took no step to stop it. He was prepared to stand aside and let it happen. This failing was especially serious because as Commander he had the power to stop it. He was therefore a crucial participant in the coup. His guilt was as great, and in fact greater than that of any of those who carried out the destruction and violence that accompanied the coup.

Despite the Commander in Chief and President Ratu Sir KKT Mara questioning the wisdom of Bainimarama leaving the country at an unsettled time, Bainimarama insisted that it was alright for him to go. The President yielded to Bainimarama's view.

Bainimarama departed for Norway on May 12th with full knowledge that the coup would occur on May 19th 2000.

Events of 18th May 2000

The events of 18th May, the day before the coup, were described to the RFMF Board of Enquiry by Lt.Colonel Seruvakula. They were as follows.

Sergeant Filimoni Tikotani requested the CRW troop leader Lieutenant Charles Dakuliga to meet him at the Laucala Bay hangar in Suva to receive orders from the Officer Commanding CRW Units, Lieutenant Penaia Baleinamau. At that meeting Tikotani told Dakuliga that Bainimarama had issued orders through Lt Baleinamau, Major Ilisoni Ligairi and Lt.Colonel Philipo Tarakinikini that they were to take over Parliament the next day. Those Counter Revolutionary soldiers who queried the order were told that Bainimarama knew about the plan but had to be overseas.

Lt.Colonel Seruvakula stated that he and Lt Baleinamau were in direct daily contact with Bainimarama throughout his absence from Fiji. He also stated that Bainimarama told him not to tell other officers that they were talking to each other.



Events of 19th May 2000

The coup occurred on 19th May as planned when CRW personnel entered Parliament and took Government members hostage. Live weapons were held and used by those CRW personnel at that time. Bainimarama was the only person who could have authorized the CRW personnel to act as they did and to employ live weapons.

Bainimarama had recalled Major Liqairi to head the takeover of Parliament.

At the takeover shots were fired. But the CRW soldiers had been tricked into thinking that it was only a training exercise. Once they had realized that it was a trick they still continued, on the understanding that they were following orders from Bainimarama.

Occupation of Parliament: Bainimarama's attempts to take Leadership of the coup

The CRW in Parliament were supplied directly by the Army with food, fuel and weapons. This would have been impossible without Bainimarama's support. In fact Bainimarama gave direct orders for such support. He stated: "RFMF supports the cause." He also repeatedly expressed support for Speight.

After the coup and during the 56 days in which hostages were held at Parliament, Bainimarama made repeated efforts to take over leadership of the coup. There came a time when he realized that he could not succeed in this aim.

Bainimarama had hoped that with Major Liqairi and the CRW soldiers holding hostages in Parliament the rest of the Army would follow in support. However, the Army stood firm and the President condemned the takeover and declared a state of emergency. The coup did not receive sufficient support.

Bainimarama therefore had to adjust his strategy and to appear to oppose Speight. He cunningly gave the impression that he was loyally besieging Speight at the Parliament buildings in order to free the hostages and to save the nation.

Bainimarama then tricked Speight into signing the Muanikau Accord, which ended the coup and provided for the return of CRW soldiers to barracks. Speight was convicted of treason and incarcerated. He is still held incommunicado to this day so that he cannot expose Bainimarama's role in the coup.

RFMF Board of Enquiry

The events of the coup were carefully examined by the Board of Enquiry. Bainimarama was given the opportunity to give evidence to the Inquiry but he refused to do so. The conclusions of the Board were so unfavorable to him that he ordered all copies of the BOI report destroyed except one to be held by his favorite and sycophant Major Aziz Mohammed. But, another copy has survived which tells the raw truth.

Major Aziz, the person who carried out, at Bainimarama's behest, the removal of the Chief Justice was later appointed as Acting Commander.

Bainimarama also deliberately withheld the report from the Police who had requested it to assist them with their investigations.



Bainimarama transfers blame to CRW

The CRW were now being blamed for the coup as Bainimarama intended. Many were now being beaten, charged with treason and sent to jail. Bainimarama was hunting them down and torturing them. This was part of his plan to transfer the blame.

Accordingly the CRW staged a mutiny on 2nd November 2000, which Bainimarama ruthlessly reacted to, but only after it had been suppressed by gallant officers and soldiers. Bainimarama abandoned his men at the start of the mutiny to save himself by running away down through the casava patch.

Five CRW were beaten to death on his orders after the mutiny. Others languish in prison until this day. All those CRW who could tell the truth as to Bainimarama's involvement in the coup have been silenced.

Post 2000 Coup

A new Commander was being appointed by Government to replace Bainimarama so in December 2003 Bainimarama sought to rally Army support to remove Government. However he failed at that time to gather enough support. But he did blackmail Government, with threats of force, to renew his contract.

By November 2006 the Government had decided that enough was enough and Bainimarama was facing the following charges:

1. Disobedience to a lawful order by the Minister of Home Affairs, the Prime Minister's office and the office of the president
2. Sedition in threatening to remove the Minister of Home Affairs and the Prime Minister
3. Treason in plotting to overthrow the Government
4. Unlawful aborting of a Commission of Inquiry (not the Board of Inquiry)
5. Illegal removal of the President in 2000
6. Murder of CRW soldiers in 2000
7. Abuse of office.

Bainimarama reacted by staging the 2006 coup to save himself.

Conclusions

Bainimarama's biggest lie has been and continues to be that he saved Fiji in 2000.

Bainimarama continues that lie even in his 6th January 2012 speech seeking to justify substituting new drastic measures for those previously in the Public Emergency Regulations. In that speech, written by his expensive and discredited cover up agency, he mourns the devastation of the 2000 coup and says that such must not recur. This he seeks to use as a justification for his new despotic measures.

Bainimarama's regret, however, represents crocodile tears. He more than anyone is responsible for the fires of 2000. Bainimarama knew of and supported the events which led to those fires and all the other pain and sufferings of 2000.

The lesson of 2000 is that to avoid a recurrence of 2000 and to end the fast deteriorating human rights situation in Fiji it is necessary that the current regime be replaced immediately by a fully democratic government and that the Army immediately return fully and permanently to barracks.

Bainimarama must go, in the name of humanity. The exposing of his biggest lie leaves no alternative.

Introduction

This article reveals the truth about Frank Bainimarama and his lies and treasonous activities against the democratically elected Government of Fiji, its people and the Royal Fiji Military Forces (RFMF). Bainimarama **did not** save Fiji. He is the problem.

In February 1999, Bainimarama was promoted to Commander RFMF above other more highly qualified and experienced senior officers. Then in 2000 he chose to play a game that he didn't have the capability or the brains for. To save himself, Frank Bainimarama did the well known Fijian "liumuri" (betrayal) and then cunningly portrayed himself as the savior of Fiji. Indo-Fijians call this treasonous act "aage-peeche".



Government was appointing a new Commander RFMF so Bainimarama ordered his officers to plan for the removal of Government. The officers refused so he had them removed. Under duress the Government renewed Bainimarama's contract. There will be no escape from these crimes and Bainimarama knows it. So he is now doing everything and anything he possibly can, including brinkmanship, to stay in power to avoid being arrested and prosecuted.

The police were to arrest Bainimarama in November 2006 while he was in New Zealand. It was aborted and Bainimarama was made aware of it. He returned to Fiji, and on 6 December 2006 removed the lawfully and democratically elected Qarase SDL Government. The then Commissioner of Police was also removed.

Bainimarama told the world that he staged the coup, amongst other things, to rid Fiji of corruption. But the world now realizes that it was all a ploy and that Bainimarama is now even more corrupt than the Qarase Government he removed. He is also threatening and beating loyal Fiji soldiers, police officers, Church leaders, Fijian Chiefs, civil servants, citizens and defenseless unarmed women who disagree with his brutal and corrupt dictatorship. He is also telling many lies, including:

- Lying about the date on which he would hold an election
- Lying about lifting restrictions which he has burdened the people of Fiji with for many years
- Lying about holding democratic elections in 2014 when he cannot hold such elections without being arrested and charged.

We contend that Bainimarama staged the 2006 coup to save himself from being arrested and charged by the Fiji police. The return of democracy to Fiji with free and fair elections will, no doubt, also return with the police charges against Bainimarama. Therefore, Bainimarama is doing everything and anything to ensure he remains in power and can prevent those charges from being laid against him in a truly democratic system with a free and independent court of law.

This article is far from perfect, but at least it will give the people of Fiji and the world a much clearer understanding of the true motives behind Frank Bainimarama's actions, specifically how he is manipulating the Fiji military forces and lying to Fiji and to the world to save himself from prosecution and achieve his desire of becoming leader of Fiji.



What was done

This article covers three key periods of time:

1. The 2000 Coup and Bainimarama's involvement
2. The Post 2000 lead up to 2006
3. The 2006 Coup.

Information was gleaned from copies of documents (attached) that were made available to us from people inside and outside of the RFMF and Police force, civil servants and civilians. The key information includes:

- RFMF Board of Inquiry Report – The Board of Inquiry led by Lt. Colonel Jackson Evans (from 21 August 2000 to 24 October 2000) looked into the involvement of the First Meridian Squadron (CRW) in the illegal takeover of Parliament on 19 May 2000 and the subsequent holding of hostages until 13 July 2000. Frank Bainimarama refused to be interviewed and he ordered the findings destroyed with only one copy to remain with Brigadier Aziz. Please note, Brig. Aziz was a major at the time and later, like Bainimarama, was promoted over other senior and more qualified military officers.
- Letter from Ratu Silatolu to Bainimarama
- Article from Lt.Col Tarakinikini
- Col Alfred Tuatoko's statement which clearly outlines Bainimarama's orders on 16 December 2003 for the Senior RFMF officers to plan for the removal of the Government
- Col G Kadavulevu's (05 January 2004) formal advise to Bainimarama against removing the SDL Government
- CEO Ministry of Home Affairs' statement on Bainimarama's conduct
- Lt Col SV Raduva advise (19 January 2004) to the CEO, Ministry of Home Affairs about Bainimarama's threat to remove the SDL Government
- Father Akauola's 2003 assessment of Commodore Bainimarama's performance as Commander RFMF – It was requested by a senior Bainimarama military aid and done in consultation with RFMF soldiers and officers
- Father Akauola's 2010 interviews with Ratu Tevita Mara
- Col JB Baledrokadroka's interview with Lt.Col Seruvakula
- Court martial records
- Newspaper articles
- TV interviews.



Bainimarama's Miraculous Promotion to Commander RFMF

Navy Captain Frank Bainimarama was recommended for the position of Commander RFMF by his predecessor Brigadier Ratu Epeli Ganilau.

Bainimarama's name was forwarded to the Minister of Home Affairs Paul Manueli and the Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka before the Commander-in-Chief and President Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara's endorsement. Announcing Capt. Bainimarama's appointment, Home Affairs Minister Paul Manueli said he was confident of his [Bainimarama] capabilities. However, Senior RFMF officers state that there was a clear lack of leadership and direction from Commander Frank Bainimarama, so they had to step-in and deal with the crisis of 2000 and restore law and order to Fiji.

A very Senior officer also quoted that Bainimarama, from day one on the job, had no idea how to lead and wondered around aimlessly in his white uniform leaving senior officers to do all the work. We can clearly see this same "skill" being applied today in Bainimarama's use of the lying, corrupt, including everything that is evil, illegal Fiji AG Khiayum.

Colonel Saubulinayau stated in his interview that a member of the Board of Inquiry knew that the majority of the boys in green [Fiji army] didn't like Bainimarama and that Bainimarama managed to be appointed due to a fault in the system.

Fiji's Daily Post newspaper of 26th February 1999 also claimed that tensions were high at Fiji Military Forces' headquarters, QEB, Nabua, when the Chief- of-Staff Navy Captain Bainimarama was named the new Army Commander.

Bainimarama, a relatively junior officer, had been appointed Commander RFMF over other more highly qualified and experienced senior Army officers.

Lt Colonel Filipo Tarakinikini, military spokesman during the 2000 coup, accused Bainimarama of bringing a style of leadership foreign to senior officers when he assumed command in February 1999. Tarakinikini said that Bainimarama's leadership was personalized, egocentric and capricious, and he had a tendency to be unpredictable and inconsistent¹.

How Frank Bainimarama, a junior officer, ever got to be promoted to Commander RFMF over more senior and highly qualified and experienced officers is something that seriously needs to be looked at.

¹ Radio New Zealand, 'Fiji military officer sues Commander, President and Attorney-General' 14/04/2005.



The 2000 Coup

The 19 May 2000 coup did not come as a surprise. In the months leading up to the coup Bainimarama received regular military briefings of an impending coup. The Fiji military had been aware of the threats to government, and had built up intelligence through the use of a military intelligence unit. In addition, soldiers from the CRW unit and the 3rd Fiji Battalion were doubling as intelligence operatives gathering information and advising Bainimarama.

Bainimarama also repeatedly told his officers after the 19 May 2000 takeover that a few months after the Fiji Labour Party (FLP) Coalition Government had won the May 1999 elections, the leading Nationalist Sakeasi Butadroka had requested a meeting with him to appeal for the Army to overthrow Chaudhry's government in a fully fledged military coup.

Bainimarama had also chased away the officer who had briefed him of the impending coup saying the brief was "bullshit". The same officer also advised Bainimarama of a possible coup within the RFMF, to which Bainimarama angrily responded that there will be no such thing!

The Commanding Officer 3rd Battalion, Lt.Colonel Viliame Seruvakula, tells Bainimarama, 24 hours before Bainimarama is to leave to attend a conference in Norway that a coup was going to take place in a week. Bainimarama simply says "...ok set you know what to do I have to attend this meeting it is very important for the RFMF". In spite of being given military briefings of an impending coup Bainimarama does nothing to prevent it and he lies to his Commander in Chief that all is under control.

One would rationally think that stopping a coup would be more important than attending a conference! Not for Bainimarama, unless there was another "plan" already in play that Bainimarama knew about. Either this or Bainimarama was too dumb and gutless to do anything about it.

The Commander in Chief and the President, Ratu Sir KKT Mara, questioned why he (Bainimarama) was leaving the country in the midst of a potential crisis. The President said that, "He [Bainimarama] came to let me know that he is going to Norway for a conference. I said do you believe that this is the right time to go and he assured me and said there was some marches in the West a week ago and everything was all right and the reports I get was ok. I said alright, if you think it's alright, you can go".²

We contend that Frank Bainimarama was well aware of the impending coup, before it happened and did nothing to protect the Government and instead he departs for Norway on 12th May 2000, which was all part of Bainimarama's plan.

Bainimarama wanted to run the show

Ratu Timoci Silatolu, in his letter to Bainimarama, reminds Bainimarama that he (Bainimarama) had told him that he (Bainimarama) wanted to run the show and denounced Ratu Silatolu as having no credibility. At that time Bainimarama was already running the country after he had illegally removed the President in a second coup. On 29 May 2000, Bainimarama televised to the nation that he had assumed executive authority of the country and declare martial law"³.

² Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, transcript of Fiji TV One *Close Up* programme interview with Richard Broadbridge, 29 April 2001.

³ *Fiji Times*, 'Army takes over State,' Tue 30 May 2000.



That night, the President and his family were evacuated for their safety to a naval vessel. Bainimarama went on board with several senior officers and presented a tabua (whale's tooth) in a Fijian ceremony to the President requesting him to step aside. The President acquiesced in the Fijian language saying that since the very people who were to protect him had asked for him to step aside from office, he would never again return to the high office. Speight had captured parliament, and now Bainimarama captured the President's executive powers. There was no need for the President to step aside. Bainimarama, as Commander RFMF, just needed to do his job. But we contend that he had ulterior motives.

For 37 days until 4th July 2000, Bainimarama retained executive authority and tasted absolute power for the first time⁴. When advised by his Military Council, Bainimarama refused to give up power. Later, he reluctantly handed over power to a civilian interim government headed by co-opted member Laisenia Qarase. But this was only after the chiefs and people of Naitasiri had threatened to takeover QEB barracks if the military interim government did not hand back rule to the GCC. The GCC would have then elected a President to form a civilian interim government.

George Speight's group (GSG) didn't want Bainimarama to run the show. Colonel Draunidalo stated that the GSG did offer Bainimarama the role of head of state and that Bainimarama had arrogantly told them that he (Bainimarama) would present yaqona to his officers and they would accept the offer. The officers did not accept it.⁵ Bainimarama then orders all soldiers back to barracks.

We contend that during the 56 days of negotiating with George Speight and his group Bainimarama finally realized his predicament that he (Bainimarama) was not going to "run the show". Ratu Silatolu writes that he knew that Bainimarama was not going to honor the accord with Speight because Speight had appeared at an opportunistic time and claimed all the credit for the removal of the Chaudhry Government.

Ratu Silatolu also states that Bainimarama then had to look at removing any evidence of his (Bainimarama) involvement in the 2000 coup. We also contend that to achieve this objective Bainimarama required scapegoats to take the blame for him.

Bainimarama's lack of direction and leadership had already put the RFMF officers and soldiers in a state of total confusion, which made his manipulation of their actions integral in firstly, deflecting blame from himself (Bainimarama) and secondly, fixing it upon the unwitting CRW soldiers and RFMF officers. Subsequently, he had to both silence anyone and everyone with either a suspicion or actual knowledge of his true agenda from enabling that truth from being revealed. Senior officers who could piece the information together were removed and civilians are still being beaten by soldiers.

Bainimarama's Scapegoats

Major Liqairi and the CRW soldiers were the unfortunate scapegoats. They had followed Bainimarama's orders and went into Parliament with Speight and his group on the understanding that they were only there to protect the hostages from the civilian members of Speight's group.

The CRW soldiers were lured into the trap only hours before when they were told that they were attending a training exercise in protecting VIP's in a hostage situation. Sadly, they realized too late that it was all a lie and that they were being used. But by this time the army and the world were of the opinion that the CRW were a key part of Speight's group in overthrowing Government.

⁴ *Fiji Times*, Josephine Prasad, 'He wanted it all Tarakinikini says', 18 Apr 2002.

⁵ Statement by Colonel Draunidalo to the RFMF Board of Inquiry



The Voice of the Oppressed People of Fiji Restoring Democracy, Rule of Law & Human Rights in Fiji

Lt.Colonel Seruvakula stated that a group of CRW soldiers were undergoing survival training on Makuluva Island on 18 May 2000 (See map on right of Suva City Peninsula, slipway and Makuluva Island)

At around 10:30pm their troop leader Lieutenant Charles Dakuliga received a call from Sergeant Filimoni Tikotani to meet him at the Laucala Bay hangar to receive orders from the Officer Commanding CRW, Lieutenant Penaia Baleinamau.

Lt.Colonel Seruvakula states that at the hangar Lt.Dakuliga meets Sgt.Tikotani, George Speight and his brother Jim

Speight, Ravutuqica and a public works employee Simione Drole⁶. Tikotani then tells Dakuliga that the Commander RFMF (Bainimarama) had issued orders through their OC Lt.Baleinamau, Major Ilisoni Ligairi and Lt.Col Philipo Tarakinikini that they are to take over parliament the next day. This meant that the OC Lt.Baleinamau, Major Ligairi and Lt.Col Tarakinikini were all following their Commander Bainimarama's orders.

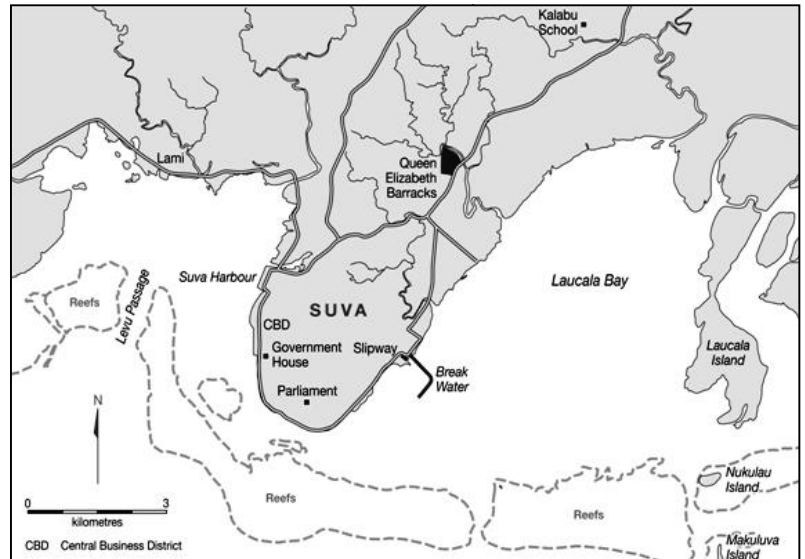
Court martial records indicate that some of the CRW troopers on Makuluva did not agree with the orders but Dakuliga advised them that the "word" from their Officer Commanding was that the Commander Frank Bainimarama knows about it but had to be overseas.

Lt.Col Seruvakula stated that he and Lt.Baleinamau were in direct daily contact with Bainimarama, from when Bainimarama left for Norway and up until his return to Nadi. Lt.Col Seruvakula also stated that Bainimarama told him not to tell other officers that they were talking to each other.

We contend that Bainimarama was giving orders to Lt.Baleinamau (Officer Commanding CRW) in support of the coup and talking to Lt.Col Seruvakula (Commander 3rd Fiji Infantry Regiment) to check on the army's reaction so that he (Bainimarama) could maneuver himself accordingly. In talking to Seruvakula Bainimarama bypassed the acting Commander, Colonel Alfred Tuatoko.

In addition, all the CRW operatives who normally report in on the last Friday of each month were all gathered and present at camp on Thursday 18th May, the day before the coup. The operatives were part of the first group who entered parliament on 19 May 2000.

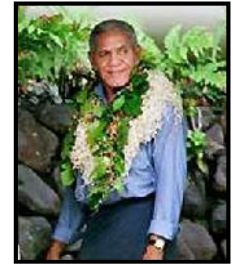
As a specialist unit the CRW reports directly and only to the Commander RFMF who is the only person in the RFMF with the authority to deploy the CRW and their weapons.



⁶ Viliame Seruvakula, citing Charles Dakuliga in court, 20 Jan 2003, reproduced in *Fiji Times*, Elenoa Masi-Baselala, 'Coup weapons left on dinghy', 21 Jan 2003.



Major Liqairi (pictured, on right) had only been back in uniform for three weeks when the coup occurred. He was 60 years old and retired but had been recalled for six months duty by Bainimarama. Liqairi was only an advisor and had no authority to order the CRW soldiers into any situation or to deploy any weapons.



In his statement Liqairi recalls that he told Bainimarama that he was too old to return to duty, but Bainimarama told him that he (Liqairi) wasn't old. The Board of inquiry was unable to get a reason from Bainimarama as to why he had recalled Liqairi when there were other qualified and experienced serving officers available. Bainimarama had refused to be interviewed.

But after only three weeks into the job Major Liqairi is in parliament overthrowing Government with George Speight, whom he had just met for the first time earlier on that same morning, 19 May 2000.

We contend that as an ex-British SAS and a highly disciplined soldier, Major Liqairi was following orders from his commander Bainimarama.

Bainimarama knew that the CRW soldiers respected Major Liqairi and with both Major Liqairi and the CRW soldiers in parliament he had hoped that the rest of the army would follow in support. But the army stood fast to resolve the crisis. In addition, the President also condemned the takeover and declared a 'state of emergency'. These actions changed the game plan and resulted in other high profile coup supporters from joining George Speight in parliament. George Speight and his group were left on their own and therefore had to improvise.

Phone records show that Lieutenant Colonel Tarakinikini (following orders from his Commander Bainimarama) called Staff Sergeant Bainimoli at 03:15am on the morning of the coup. He then called Colonel Alfred Tuatoko the acting Commander RFMF and Land Force Commander at around 4am⁷. A little later Tarakinikini called Lt Baleinamau the acting officer commanding CRW. There is no record of what was discussed but at 07:45am Lt Dakuliga and his team from Makuluva meet up with their OC Lt Baleinamau and Major Liqairi at the Laucala Bay slipway. According to Major Liqairi it is also the first time that he meets George Speight.

Lt.Colonel Seruvakula stated that the CRW OC Lt Baleinamau then tells Lt Dakuliga and his team from Makuluva that Major Ligairi would support a mission into the parliament complex and that it was only an exercise. It was only after they had entered parliament and shots were fired inside the building when the CRW troopers realized that it was not an exercise.

More CRW arrived at parliament after being told by Lt Baleinamau to turn up for security duty (See picture on right of CRW on security duty). Other CRW arrived in support of their team mates and were not fully aware of what was happening. However, once in parliament, the CRW troopers found it difficult to walk away because of the strong bond they shared as a unit. This bond had a major impact on their decision to stay on in parliament and help each other out. But they were also of the understanding that they were following orders from their Commander Frank Bainimarama.



Following Orders by
Bainimarama

Other CRW soldiers who had just returned to Suva from training exercises in the west were told by their officers to stay away from parliament. And they did stay away.

Adi Kikau, a harsard reporter and a hostage, stated that the CRW soldier guarding them had told her that they (CRW) were only told a few hours earlier to change into civilian clothes and get into a van.

⁷ Evan's Report.



The van brought them to parliament and that they were there for an exercise. The CRW soldier also told Adi Kikau not to worry and that it would all be over by 4pm that same afternoon. The hostage situation continued for 56 days.

In his letter, Ratu Silatolu alludes to a dispute on the displacement of the Prime Minister of the Day, Mahendra Chaudhry, which resulted in the hostage situation extending 56 days. Ratu Silatolu says that he "*just wanted to resolve the matter as Frank Bainimarama's proposal was alright*". We do not have access to the content of this proposal.

The CRW who went into parliament were being resupplied by QEB camp with food, fuel and weapons and they were still receiving their normal pay. This reinforced the CRW soldiers' and the army's view that the RFMF was supporting George Speight and his group. It was the presence of Major Ilisoni Ligairi and other CRW soldiers inside parliament which sent a signal that officers close to the senior command were in support of the coup.

Lt. Baleinamau stated that Col. Ioane Naivalurua had entered parliament and had told the CRW soldiers that what they were doing was wrong. However, Col. Naivalurua did not tell the CRW soldiers to stop what they were doing and to return to barracks.

Lt. Dakai stated that he waited a week at camp until the 26th of May but there was still no clear direction from RFMF on how they would deal with the situation in parliament. This non-action and the fact that the army were still re-supplying parliament with food, men and weapons convinced Lt. Dakai that the RFMF was behind the coup, so he went over to join the boys in parliament and to help them organize themselves and to provide support to them.

Colonel S Draunidalo stated that he was part of a think-tank made up of Colonels and at their first meeting Bainimarama told them that "*RFMF supports the cause*". This meant that they (the Colonels) had to develop strategies to support their Commander Bainimarama's directive, which is to support the Indigenous Fijian cause led by George Speight and his group.

This principle also applied to other officers who had received instructions from their Commander Bainimarama. They then had to carry out their Commander's directive and that is what they did.

Bainimarama also instructed his officers to continue to resupply and support the CRW soldiers in parliament as they were directly responsible for the safety of the hostages. Bainimarama also tells them that an inquiry would be held after the crisis and charges laid. Therefore, QEB continued to resupply and support CRW in parliament.

Lt. Colonel Seruvakula stated that on Sunday, 21 May 2000, he attended a briefing in QEB where he was told that "*the CRW were doing what they were tasked to do...to provide security of the hostages*"and "*we (RFMF) should support them, and let them (CRW) do their job and not to interfere.*"

Lt. Col Seruvakula also states that he was told, "*Bill you must not look at this as a western type hostage situation, this is about us the Fijians, what you saw on Friday (19) when people looted the city was the sign that our people are hungry and do not have the necessities of life, the only way to kick start that is start all over again....SLK (Sitiveni Rabuka) tried but he gave in to pressure and went back to the Indians to join hands leaving our people back to square one...*".



Lt. Baleinamau states that Frank Bainimarama advised him and the CRW soldiers at QEB camp that if they wanted to go and join the CRW soldiers already in parliament, because he knew of their strong bond as a unit, then they just needed to sign their leave application forms before going down to parliament. The CRW boys signed their leave forms, which further reinforced their understanding that they were following their Commander's orders. However, the leave application forms are never approved by the army. This was a trick by Bainimarama to get the CRW soldiers to join the soldiers already at parliament.

George Speight, Rakuita Vakalalabure and other members of their group went from Parliament to QEB and met with Bainimarama in his office. After this meeting, all military officers were called up to the officer's mess where Bainimarama briefed them on the meeting he had just had with George and his group. Bainimarama told the officers that he (Bainimarama) agreed with Speight and that the Army should support their course of action.

Bainimarama was interrupted by Colonel Waqanisau who advised Bainimarama that the Army can't agree with George Speight and his group. Colonel Waqanisau added that they [George and his group] had illegally removed an elected Government and are a group of terrorists. He also told Bainimarama that "with all due respect Sir, honour the institution, this uniform which others before us had died for. We simply cannot follow what the terrorist Speight and his group wants".

All the officers present started clapping and cheering in agreement with Col Waqanisau. On seeing this reaction Bainimarama changed his stance and agreed with Col Waqanisau. Bainimarama was clearly playing both sides and we contend it was to further his own ambitions.

Sunday 2nd July 2000, former coup leader Sitiveni Rabuka claims that there are other key players behind the illegal takeover of the Chaudhry Government.

Lt. Col Seruvakula also said that Ratu Silatolu and Tevita Bukarau had told him that the Commander Frank Bainimarama was misleading the army, implying that both the army and Bainimarama were holding two separate discussions with the George Speight Group. Ratu Silatolu and Tevita Bukarau suggested that Seruvakula overthrow Bainimarama and the hostages would be released. Seruvakula turns down the offer citing the army's oath of allegiance.

After the hostage crisis ended and the CRW soldiers returned to barracks, in accordance with the Muanikau Accord, Bainimarama tells the CRW soldiers that they are all forgiven and that they would be posted to other units. But this wasn't totally true. Bainimarama still needed his scapegoats so a number of CRW soldiers were arrested, beaten, charged for treason and imprisoned.

Ratu Silatolu, in his letter, refers to these soldiers as the "**sacrificial lambs**", so that Bainimarama could save himself and, instead, "*was being credited for restoring law and order and no-one was the wiser*".

RFMF Board of Inquiry

On Bainimarama's orders the Fiji Military Forces established a Board of Inquiry (from 21 August 2000 to 24 October 2000) to look into the involvement of the First Meridian Squadron (CRW) in the illegal takeover of Parliament on 19 May 2000 and the subsequent holding of hostages until 13 July 2000. The inquiry was led by Lt. Colonel Jackson Evans.

The Board interviewed and recorded evidence from one hundred and twelve (112) military and civilian witnesses. Frank Bainimarama refused to be interviewed.



The Board of Inquiry report implicated Bainimarama so he ordered the report destroyed with only one copy to remain with Major Aziz Mohammed. **Please note**, Major Aziz Mohammed is now a Brigadier. Like Bainimarama, Aziz was promoted over other senior and more qualified military officers.

02 November 2000 Mutiny

It is important to understand that the CRW mutiny of 02 November 2000 was not against the RFMF or the people of Fiji. The mutiny was aimed at one person only, Frank Bainimarama, because he had used the CRW to do his bidding and then he (Bainimarama) betrayed (liumuri) them to save himself.

The Muanikau accord that helped end the hostage situation included an agreement that all CRW soldiers involved in parliament would return to RFMF. The murderer Frank Bainimarama also told CRW soldiers that they were all forgiven and that they would be posted to other units. Meanwhile, CRW members were being arrested and charged for treason.

So what were the CRW to do? They were being blamed for the 2000 coup, arrested at their homes, beaten and then charged for treason and either sent to jail or imprisoned on Nukulau Island, which was setup as a detention camp. Then Frank Bainimarama tells the CRW that their unit is going to be disbanded, further suggesting to the world that the CRW unit was guilty of staging the coup and could no longer be trusted and had to be dealt with.

The CRW soldiers saw their options as:

- 1 just accept what was happening to them and move on
- 2 kill Bainimarama for betraying them.

Frank Bainimarama was counting on option one, with the CRW soldiers just rolling over and accepting their predicament. But Frank Bainimarama was wrong!

The CRW were not going to take the blame for following orders from their Commander, Frank Bainimarama, who had betrayed his men to save himself. The CRW were all clear, in their understanding, that they had followed their Commander's orders to go into Parliament and to protect the hostages. And that is what they had done.

To accept what was happening to them and move on meant going to jail and their families would no longer receive their income and support. How were the families to survive? Who would pay the bills and put food on the table? And their children...

The CRW chose to kill Bainimarama for betraying them. However, this act to kill another Fijian went against their beliefs and inner being. It was hard for them to contemplate. So to help overcome this situation the CRW soldiers first consumed large quantities of alcohol before the operation got underway. This move proved fatal. Their operation didn't go according to plan and the rest is history, with Bainimarama setting a world record for the "casava-patch" dash. Bainimarama had abandoned his men at the start of the mutiny and ran away to save himself.

A Lt.Colonel commented that it was raining that day but there was dust in the air! The Lt.Colonel was dismissed from the army. It wasn't raining that sad day of the mutiny but the Lt.Colonel's comment aptly describes Bainimarama's character and lack of bravery in deserting his post and men. The Fijian word for this is lamusona!

Loyal Fiji CRW soldiers, who had followed their commander's orders, were now being hunted down, captured, tortured and some murdered. Even those CRW that were not involved in parliament were being hunted down and tortured.

There were over 60 tortured CRW soldiers held captive in Korovou prison, just across the road from the Suva yacht club. The number of CRW soldiers being arrested was increasing daily and they were taken to Korovou prison. Their families were not told of their whereabouts and they didn't know if they were dead or alive.

Frank Bainimarama had given strict instructions that none of the tortured CRW soldiers were to receive any medical attention. But through the grace of God, a Marist Priest, Father Seluini Akauola, a specialist Moral Theologian and Counselor, was there in Fiji and he went out of his way to seek help for the CRW soldiers. They finally received medical attention and most of them are still alive today.

Fr. Akauola, who often visited the CRW soldiers in Korovou, recalled with tears in his eyes, that the CRW boys were treated like animals. He said that they had been locked up in their dark cells for days, even weeks, with their injuries untreated. The injuries included multiple fractures to the arms and legs and ribs, severe bruises and swelling, and open wounds and distorted faces. Captain Steven, who had led the CRW operation against Frank Bainimarama, was near death. Fr. Akauola said that he "*could not believe that one human being could do this type of injury to another human being*". Here are a few photos of those tortured and murdered Loyal Fiji CRW soldiers.



Beaten unconscious



Beaten to death



Beaten unconscious



Murdered!!



But Frank Bainimarama was out to clear himself from any blame, so he continued to look for scapegoats and accused and implicated others as being a part of the 2000 coup. All the while refusing to be interviewed himself for his part in the 2000 coup.

To this end, Bainimarama issued instructions that Lt.Colonel Filipo Tarakinikini return to Fiji from New York to face allegation charges.

Lt.Col Tarakinikini responds in a statement (See The Daily Post article, dated April 18, 2002) saying that he had advised Bainimarama to relinquish Executive Authority to its proper place, but Bainimarama

insisted on keeping it. Lt.Col Tarakinikini goes on to state that people need to properly understand military command, as in military law command is "total", meaning that soldiers follow orders. But now Bainimarama is trying to pass the buck to the soldiers and officers that were under his (Bainimarama) command. Another "liumuri" by Frank Bainimarama, Commander RFMF.

Colonel S Draunidalo's statement also supports Lt.Col Tarakinikini's statement that in military law Command is total. Col Draunidalo stated that they (the Colonels) had to develop strategies to support their Commander Bainimarama's directive, which was to support the Indigenous Fijian cause led by George Speight and his group.

Lt.Col Tarakinikini also states that the CRW were under the direct command of someone else and not him. We contend that the only person with the authority to deploy CRW was the commander RFMF, Frank Bainimarama. Lt.Col Seruvakula also stated that Bainimarama was in direct contact with the Officer Commanding the CRW soldiers.

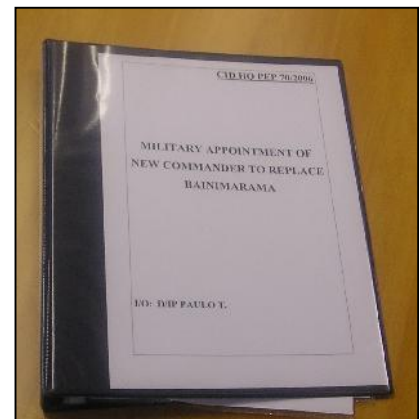
In addition, Lt.Col Tarakinikini says that no amount of cover-up will absolve responsibility for that failure, from where it truly belongs, and that all professional officers and soldiers know this. And a public inquiry will bring out those that really failed Fiji in 2000.

Post 2000 Coup

Appointment of a New Commander RFMF

Government was in the process of appointing a new Commander RFMF to replace Bainimarama, so Bainimarama broke the law by threatening the Prime Minister to renew his contract as Commander RFMF.

Ratu Silatolu, while in prison for his role in the 2000 Coup, writes a letter to Bainimarama dated 02 March 2004, congratulating Bainimarama for getting his (Bainimarama) job back. Ratu Silatolu also says that Bainimarama didn't practice "*doing to others what you would like done to you*" because as soon as Bainimarama got his job back, he started to remove others from their jobs.



Bainimarama Orders Military to Plan Removal of Government

Colonel Tuatoko states that on 16 December 2003 Bainimarama instructed his senior officers to draw up plans for the removal of Government. This is the very Government that Bainimarama, as Commander RFMF, was duty bound to protect. Bainimarama also told the officers, "dou cakava vaka totolo na plan de dou qai kidacala au sa liu sobu i ra" [hurry up and do the plans or you will be surprised when I do it myself]. The senior officers decided that they would not draw up plans because it was a criminal and treasonable act.

Bainimarama reiterated his intentions to remove Government at a military conference on 18 December 2003 and tells the officers to continue to draw up the plans. Colonel Tuatoko states that Bainimarama told them that he (Bainimarama) did not want anybody sitting on the fence and if anyone did not agree with his (Bainimarama's) intentions to remove government then they were to

leave. At the end of the conference Bainimarama personally interviews Colonel Kadavulevu, Colonel Tuatoko, Lt.Colonel Raduva, Navy Captain Teleni, Commander Koroi and Commander Natuva.

During Col.Tuatoko's interview Bainimarama says that he (Bainimarama) will forcefully remove government if his contract as Commander RFMF was not renewed. Col.Tuatoko advises Bainimarama that such an act is illegal and treasonous and that Bainimarama should seek legal options. Bainimarama states that the legal process will take too long and that he (Bainimarama) must remain as Commander RFMF because there is no other person who could pursue the May 2000 prosecutions as he was doing.



In a way Bainimarama is correct because other people would want to find out the truth. Bainimarama just wanted to remain as Commander so that he could guide the outcome of the prosecutions and not implicate himself. This is what Bainimarama has done. Anyone with information and knowledge about his (Bainimarama) involvement in the 2000 coup, that could incriminate him (Bainimarama), has either been arrested, beaten, prosecuted and locked away so that no-one hears their full story.

Colonel Tuatoko advised Bainimarama against using the RFMF institution to sort out his personal disagreements with Government. Bainimarama rejects the advice and questions Col Tuatoko's loyalty to him (Bainimarama). Col Tuatoko advises that he can't support an illegal and treasonable act. Other officers state that they, as officers, had pledged allegiance to RFMF, the institution.

On 05 January 2004 Colonel George Kadavulevu formally advises Bainimarama against removing the SDL Government.

On 12 January 2004 Colonel Kadavulevu and other senior officers are removed for advising Bainimarama against removing government. Bainimarama had initially replied that he was only testing them and then he questioned their individual loyalty to himself. The senior officers, except for Col. Naivalurua, said that, as officers, they had pledged their allegiance and loyalty to the RFMF institution. All these senior officers who had stood their professional and moral ground and questioned Bainimarama's illegal and treasonous intentions were all removed.

But why didn't these same senior officers who were removed not band together and stand by their Commander in Chief, the President, and the Prime minister and Government of the day. It was their duty to protect those in these high offices. Yes, why didn't they? This is where blind obedience to the military chain of command steps in, and what Lt. Col Tarakinikini refers to as "in military law command is total". This law goes beyond stupidity, as evident in the case of Fiji, but we will park this topic for now.

The CEO, Ministry of Home Affairs, also stated that on 12 January 2004 the Commander RFMF, Bainimarama had told him that had it not been for the Minister, he (the CEO) would have been dead already and the next time the military will come back to "finish what they started", and he (Bainimarama) would personally lead the military to town and would make sure that the CEO was the first to die.

At that point the CEO told Bainimarama that when he next comes to town he should come alone, without his weapon and without his armed body guards and then try to kill the CEO. Bainimarama became furious and challenged the CEO to a fist fight by taking off his web belt (with his weapon) and posing for a fight. This behavior portrays Bainimarama's uncouth character and juvenile intellect.



However, the Fiji military follows a strict chain of command and the military officers had also stated that there was a lot of confusion throughout the first few days of the 2000 coup. In particular, what was happening, who was in charge and which side was the military on, so it is safe to assume that Bainimarama was referring to himself when he told the CEO that the military will come back to finish what "they" started.

On 19 January 2004, Lieutenant Colonel SV Raduva advised the CEO, Ministry of Home Affairs, about Bainimarama's threat to remove Government, saying "it is the duty of every officer and soldier of the RFMF, in accordance with RFMF Standing Orders Vol 1, Part XXI, para 21.4, to notice and report any negligence or impropriety of conduct on the part of officers and soldiers".

Bainimarama's planned coup 2003/2004 didn't have the support of the senior RFMF officers so he removed them to clear all opposition to his plan to remove government.

Then during the buildup to the 2006 elections, the SDL campaigned for Fijian votes, and came up with manifestos that Bainimarama used in his argument to demonize the Government and portray himself as the only person Fiji could trust.

In September 2005 military spokesperson Lieutenant Colonel Orisi Rabukawaqa started using the term ethno-nationalism to justify Bainimarama's opposition to the SDL government's Qoliqoli (customary seashore rights) and Reconciliation bills⁸. There are statements suggesting that certain hotel owners had paid Bainimarama to stop the Qoliqoli bill. But we will park this issue for now.

The military, under Bainimarama's orders, had also embarked on its 'Truth and Justice' campaign in the run up to the elections, which was targeted against the governing SDL party. Bainimarama's primary public justification was an alleged effort to 'cleanse' Fiji of trouble-making ethno-nationalists⁹.

But this was all a ploy by Bainimarama to remove the lawfully elected Government and save himself from being arrested and charged by police.

The 2006 Coup

Bainimarama Shuts Down Witnesses Who Could Incriminate Him

On 29 January 2006 George Speight and his associates indicated their willingness to face a government proposed Reconciliation and Unity Commission. They were willing to tell everything they knew about the planning, financing, and execution of the 2000 coup. But Bainimarama objected to the establishment of the Commission. The proposed Reconciliation and Unity Commission didn't eventuate and Bainimarama continues to vigorously object to any and all attempts for a public inquiry.

The closest Fiji has come to a public inquiry was the Fiji Military Forces Board of Inquiry led by Lt. Colonel Jackson Evans.

⁸ 'Military Spokesman, Colonel Rabukawaqa speaks out on Qoliqoli and RTU Bills', *Fiji Times*, 03 Sep 2005.

⁹ Steve Ratuva, 'The Pre-election Cold War: The role of the Fiji Military during the 2006 elections', E Press, ANU, 2007.

Planned Arrest of Bainimarama and 2006 Coup

The police investigation into Frank Bainimarama goes back all the way to Bainimarama's involvement in the 2000 coup, where he betrayed his Commander in Chief, the Government of the day, the RFMF, the Counter Revolutionary Warfare unit (CRW), the people of Fiji and above all he betrayed his fellow coup conspirators. The key players in the 2000 Coup were safely locked away in Naboro prison unable to reveal what they know about Bainimarama. Others are dead.

Meanwhile, the police investigations were continuing in the background. In November 2006, the Fiji police, working with their New Zealand counterparts, organized to arrest Bainimarama while he was in New Zealand. However, this operation was cancelled. Bainimarama was made aware of this fact and that his arrest was imminent.

Bainimarama returned to Fiji and staged the coup on 6 December 2006.

Police Charges

In November 2006, the police charges against RFMF Commander Frank Bainimarama included:

1. Disobedience of a lawful order by the Minister of Home Affairs, the Prime Minister's office and the Office of the President
2. Sedition in threatening the Minister of Home Affairs and the Prime Minister's office
3. Treason in plotting to overthrow the government
4. Unlawfully obtaining approval from his Excellency the President to abort the commission of inquiry against Bainimarama, Commander Fiji Military Forces
5. Illegal removal of the President of Fiji in 2000
6. Murder of CRW soldiers in 2000
7. Abuse of office.

These pictures show files of some of the Police investigations that were conducted against Bainimarama.

These two files relate to the investigation into the murdered CRW soldiers.



Post 2006 Coup

It is clear that the dictator Bainimarama is a born liar, and in lying he exceeds in volume and ability any normal person. And he will continue to do so to ensure he remains in power to avoid being arrested and charged by police in a free and fair democratic system.

He has now hired (at very considerable cost to the hapless Fiji taxpayer) a discredited spin doctor, to cover up and embellish his lies.



Yet all these lies pall into insignificance compared to the biggest lie which he has spun and continues to spin, and which has been the basis for whatever reluctant international acceptance or forbearance has taken place in regard to his brutal junta.

Adolf Hitler's propaganda Minister Goebbels once stated that the bigger the lie and the more often it is repeated the more likely it is to be accepted. So it is the same with Bainimarama.

Frank Bainimarama is lying to Fiji and to the world. He wants everyone and certainly the people of Fiji, to believe that his record is not blood stained, that his motives are noble and that he is nothing but a selfless servant of the higher cause of a pure Fiji. But the actual record of what he said and did (or did not do) tells another story.

His actual narrative is littered with lies, paranoia, betrayals and self aggrandizement, a man escaping from the law, not doing his sworn duty to uphold it.

In Frank Bainimarama's hands, Fiji is on the fast road to rack and ruin.

International Response

U.S. Embassy cables from Suva confirmed to the world that Frank Bainimarama was using beatings and intimidation of innocent Fiji citizens to control Fiji.

The cables also confirmed that Bainimarama himself handed out some of the beatings. We also know that Frank Bainimarama beat unarmed and defenseless women, which goes some way to explaining why Bainimarama so easily abandoned his men to save himself and set a new world record in the process.

In fact Bainimarama himself told European diplomats that anyone who speaks out against his brutal rule, "*we must have them taken to barracks and beaten up*". Why does Bainimarama need to do this? Is he afraid of the truth getting out?

But more so, why does the international community not do anything about Bainimarama besides just talk. Bainimarama wasn't elected and he is now even more corrupt than the Government he deposed.

Frank Bainimarama is a dictator and a terrorist who is holding Fiji hostage but the international community has settled for talk and sanctions that do not hurt the members of Bainimarama's military junta and their key supporters!

It is clear from the events in Tunisia, Libya, Iraq and Egypt that diplomacy doesn't work and that hard decisions need to be made. It also showed that the people and citizens of these countries do not like living under an oppressive and brutal dictatorship. These were the very dictatorships that the international community was willing to accept for the past 40 years, all the while the citizens under these dictatorships were living in hardship, threatened, beaten and even killed.

In the end, the brave people of Tunisia, Libya, Iraq and Egypt decided that enough was enough. But this decision came at a huge cost. Many people lost their lives to fight for freedom. The help from the international community did make a vast difference to the outcome in Libya and without NATO's assistance Libyans may still be fighting against the heavily armed and well supplied Government forces of the dictator Col. Gaddafi. Or they would have all been arrested or killed.

Instead, this time, there is positive action from some of the international communities, with good results. Libya is now free to choose the future she wants through a democratic process.



Libya's dictator Col Gaddafi was beaten and shot



Iraq's dictator Saddam Hussein was hanged



Egypt's dictator Mubarak is on trial

But why did the international community allow Gaddafi's brutal dictatorship to continue for 40 years. Thousands of people suffered.

We can see this similar approach being applied to the situation in Fiji. As if the problem in Fiji is neither morally necessary nor politically appropriate. Or are our regional leaders uncomfortable of the hard questions or not culturally capable of the type of leadership required to assist the oppressed people of Fiji.

Why did they sit back and allow a madman, Bainimarama, to openly threaten and illegally remove a lawfully elected Government and become Fiji's brutal dictator.

Now we play a game of diplomacy with soft sanctions against Bainimarama's junta who are living up the good life on public funds.

Certain countries are unnecessarily worried about, for example:

- A. their trade with Fiji, as though Fiji businesses would stop ordering quality and more affordable products from its neighbors and start ordering products from further away that will end up being more expensive and most likely unaffordable to most of their customers in Fiji
- B. the supply of Fiji troops as if it would end under a democratic Government. What will change under a democratic Government is how the Fiji military, its powers and involvement in politics are appropriately managed. The money the soldiers earn on UN missions is of great value to their families and to the country
- C. the repayment of Fiji's loans. There is money within Fiji but no one is investing. Too afraid of extortion by Bainimarama and his illegal AG Khaiyum and their self-serving decrees.

Let's face it, with the return of a democratically elected Government in Fiji and the rule of law and an independent judiciary, investors will be free to decide on best business ventures. And they will also be safe in the knowledge that their disputes will be dealt with in accordance with law, by a free and independent judiciary. This will boost confidence and unleash investors. Soldiers will be available for UN missions and Fiji will be able to start repaying its debts.

Meanwhile the oppressed peoples of Fiji who are too afraid and unable to stand up to the brutal Bainimarama junta continue their lives in their habitual rhythms of work and leisure, habitual places of residence, habitual patterns of family and personal relations. Because the miseries of their traditional life have become so familiar that they have become bearable to ordinary people of Fiji who, growing up in such a society, learn to cope, as children born to untouchables in India acquire the skills and attitudes necessary for survival in the miserable roles they are destined to fill. But to the international community this is seen as the oppressive and brutal Bainimarama junta being nothing more than benign.



Where to Next

So is Fiji destined to wait 40 years before any sort of authentic and meaningful help is received that will lead to the restoration of democracy to Fiji. Or will the people of Fiji need to start dying first by the hundreds before any authentic help is provided.

There is sufficient evidence to suggest that Frank Bainimarama is guilty of murder and treason. But only a free and independent Fiji judiciary can make that decision and Bainimarama knows it. So to keep himself from being arrested and imprisoned, Bainimarama will do anything and everything to stay in power and control the police and judiciary. This has included beating women and anyone who opposes his brutal and corrupt dictatorship.

A few individuals stood up to oppose Frank Bainimarama but they were arrested, tortured, raped and imprisoned. The Viti Revolutionary Force (VRF) group initiated an uprising of painting anti Bainimarama graffiti across Viti Levu. It was a start to a local uprising and it would have increased with more local support had the international community provided some visible support. But this did not happen. Some even condemned the actions of the VRF group. The VRF leaders have now been arrested and face imprisonment. So what will it take for Fiji to be free and return to democracy?

Ronald Reagan, 40th President of the United States (1981–1989) said that "*Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same.*" So what is all this international talk about leadership and upholding democracy, especially, when there does not appear to be much stomach or willingness to fight for or to defend democracy.

The people of Fiji live under fear and need a leader to show the way out. Prime Minister Qarase requested international assistance before his Government was overthrown, but it did not come. On 6 December 2006 his government was replaced by a tyrant and dictator Bainimarama who has since removed the Great Council of Chiefs, deregistered the Methodist Church of Fiji, implemented illegal decrees to censor the media, abused public funds, appointed unqualified military officers to positions outside their depth, and threatened, beat and raped opponents to his brutal dictatorship. These are only a few of the draconian changes Bainimarama has implemented.

From time to time a truly bestial ruler like Frank Bainimarama can come to power but with democracy and freedom in Fiji their accession to power could regularly be prevented.

Both the people of Fiji and the international community need to consider and decide on the role they want to play. Some have already made their deals. However, their action or non action now will be viewed by future generations as either being an authentic leader or not. The future peace and tranquility of the region will also depend on it.

So where to next? Do we:

- 1 continue down the diplomacy road of more talk that could take 40 years and wait and see if the people of Fiji will revolt within that time and end up losing many lives
- 2 take decisive action now that includes the combined efforts of the international community and the people of Fiji to restore democracy to Fiji. And uphold the 2009 Fiji Court of Appeal Ruling, which includes taking Fiji to elections within a year. Then the people of Fiji will be able to decide who should lead them and in what direction they want to go.

We choose option 2. But which country is willing and ready to provide the oppressed people of Fiji with the authentic help that they need to achieve freedom and democracy. Will it be a leader nation or a follower. Time will tell.