BAINIMARAMA REGIME'S LATEST ASSAULT ON FIJI TRADE UNIONS
BY RATU TEVITA MARA, 10 August 2011

The Essential Industries Employment Decree and the move by the oppressive, repressive and illegal regime in Fiji to cease the deduction of Union subscriptions from the wages/salaries of Public Service Union members is a clear and obvious attack on trade unionism and a deliberate attempt to miniaturize and destroy the Trade Union Movement in Fiji.

It is an uncaring assault on labour unions and a blatant infringement of the fundamental rights and freedoms of Public Service workers.

I condemn in the strongest possible terms this new vile, evil and malicious act by the military Junta and particularly by the illegal so-called Attorney-General Aiyaz Khaiyum.

It must have dawned on the military Junta that the strength and solidarity of the Trade Union Movement is a stumbling block to their total and absolute control and dictatorship of the entire Fiji nation. The recent visits of Fiji Trade Union officials to New Zealand and Australia and their exposure and revelation of the abuses, excesses and brutality of the regime no doubt forced the regime into such a reprehensible act. It was restrained in arresting them and beating them up so it resorted to this deplorable move.

I warmly welcome the visit to Fiji this week of a delegation from the International Labour Organisation (ILO). I urge the delegation to be compelling in its discussions with the military Junta and to force it to withdraw the Decree. If the military Junta does not accede, the ILO should impose a range of strong sanctions.

I also welcome the statement by Amnesty International condemning the Decree and calling for its repeal as well as an end to the harassment of union leaders.

I offer my full support to the Fiji Trade Union Movement and the workers in Fiji.

I call on the Australian and New Zealand Trade Union Movements to take action against the illegal regime for this new assault on the Trade Union Movement and the Public Service Workers in Fiji.