



# Office of Hon Murray McCully

Minister of Foreign Affairs

16 December 2008

Commodore Voreqe Bainimarama  
Interim Prime Minister  
Government Buildings  
Suva,  
FIJI

Dear Commodore Bainimarama

At our meeting last Thursday evening I promised to provide you with a full response on the issues you raised with me. I have now had the opportunity to discuss these matters with my Cabinet colleagues.

As I explained to you at our meeting, the incoming National Government is intent upon improving relations between New Zealand and Fiji, and looks forward to the opportunity to relax progressively the sanctions currently in place. This is a course of action we would embark upon as soon as a clear and credible timetable agreed with political stakeholders in Fiji, and acceptable to the Leaders of the Pacific Islands' Forum, is identified by the interim government for the holding of elections in Fiji. We continue to hope that the Forum Leaders meeting in late January will provide the opportunity to commence this process. The travel restrictions will continue to apply in relation to the cases you raised with me in the meantime.

I was deeply concerned to be told by you that failure to provide exemptions in the cases nominated by you would lead to your government requiring our Acting High Commissioner to leave Fiji. Such an action would be a further setback to the prospect of improving relations between New Zealand and Fiji, and would carry consequences that would risk further damage to the relationship.

Any expulsion of New Zealand's Acting High Commissioner in Fiji would be matched by the immediate expulsion from New Zealand of the Acting High Commissioner for Fiji. Such a situation would be deeply disappointing to the New Zealand Government.

The New Zealand High Commission in Fiji, currently headed by the Acting High Commissioner, renders important services that benefit not just the people of our two countries, but also other nations in the region. The NZIS office processes around 35,000 visa applications each year and the NZTE office promotes two way trade between New Zealand and Fiji and other

nations in the region. As the current Trade Commissioner, Dr Simon Mark, is the husband of the Acting High Commissioner, he would be expected to leave Fiji in the event the Acting High Commissioner was expelled. The office also carries out important overseas development assistance functions for the benefit of Fiji and the region more broadly. The removal, in effect, of a second New Zealand High Commissioner to Fiji would have a serious impact on the capacity of the office to deliver these services. This is a matter we would need to consider further, and which we would wish to discuss with interested parties in the region.

During my time in Suva I expressed, both publicly and privately, the desire of the new Government in New Zealand to find a constructive path forward. As I said to you in our meeting, it is our desire to moderate and remove the current sanctions as soon as a clear path to democratic elections is identified. I therefore ask you to reflect carefully before taking steps that will delay these improvements being put in place. I am happy to discuss these matters further at any stage and will attempt to call you today to clarify any matters you wish to discuss.

Yours sincerely



Hon Murray McCully  
Minister of Foreign Affairs