

My wife and I submitted our submission to the Parliament Standing Committee on Social Affairs on 7 December 2016.

But I refer to Matilda Simmons (FT 17/11/16) and wish to respond to Mr Fatiaki Misau's claim that "previously Rotumans were registered only to their fathers, but under the new Bill a Rotuman child can be registered to both parents as per Polynesian customs" which I beg to differ.

The Rotuma Lands Act was enacted on 17 April 1959.

Section 4(2) of the said Act is very clear "Provided that **a Rotuman born before the commencement of this Act may be registered by the Commission as a member of two kainaga, one on the father's side and one on the mother's**. In the event of any such Rotuman belonging to more than one kainaga on his father's or mother's side, he shall be entitled to choose of which **two of such kainaga (one on his father's side and one on his mother's)** he wishes to be registered as a member."

No doubt in this instance, a Rotuman (the general term use to mean either a male or female) born before or on 17/4/1959 has both paternal and maternal lineage. This differs greatly from that of Mr Fatiaki Misau's suggestion of "previously Rotumans were registered only to their fathers, but under the new bill a Rotuman child can be registered to both parents."

But given our land mass, ideally the proposed Rotuma Lands Bill No7 of 2015 should aim to remove all forms of discrimination such as "a Rotuman born before the commencement of this Act" (which was 17 April 1959) and allow equality for all Rotumans irrespective of the genders to register under both parents!

Instead the proposed "Transmission of Land Rights" section 26 of Bill No 7 of 2015 compounded the issue by aligning Rotumans to the Vola Ni Kawa Bula of the iTaukei who are Melanesians when we are Polynesians with a unique language, customs and traditions. These lead me to believe that maybe due to Mr Fatiaki Misau's vested interest as a member of the iTaukei Trust Fund Board that he has totally ignore section 4(2) of the current Act.

Also the proposed section 26(1) (b) of the said Bill, not only discriminated against all males born before or on 17 April 1959 and all females especially those women married to non Rotumans who will be at the mercy of their brothers and cousins.

The proposed section is contrary to the Constitution of Fiji's Bill of Rights, Fiji's Anti Discrimination Act 1977 on gender and the UN Human Rights Laws thus my gripe with Mr Misau for misleading the Parliament Standing Committee on Social Affairs and most Rotumans on 7/11/2016.

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