

Rotuma Land Act

I would like to comment on the above issue raised by Tomasi Taukave. After reading your articles sir, I concluded that you are a Rotuman who is very much concerned with regard to any changes to the Rotuma Lands Act Cap 138 and the Rotuma Act Cap 122 that might have detrimental effects on our people. Believe me that you are not alone and I for one as well as many others share the same sentiments. However, I feel that perhaps I can assist you by elaborating further and enlightening you on some of the issues that you raised.

The perception or belief that Rotuma is still part of the British Colony is incorrect.

When Fiji became independent in 1970, Rotuma went along with Fiji and the British government ceased to have any responsibilities over Rotuma. We appreciated what our fore-fathers did but all that is now history and we have to move on.

I have copies of both acts and some clauses or provisions are obsolete and no longer relevant.

The opportunity to amend our two acts is not an everyday occurrence and we must be grateful that you and I did have the opportunity to contribute our positive inputs for the betterment of our Rotuman people.

Fatiaki Misau was appointed to lead a team to carry out this difficult task of reviewing our two acts.

The team was also given their Terms of Reference by which they were to adhere to. Be rest assured that Mr Misau cannot change both acts by himself but has to ensure that the wishes and aspirations of the Rotuman people are included in the amendments.

To state that Mr Misau will be taken to court is rather harsh and indicated a lack of appreciation. I have raised my concern in the Rotuma Island Council Chamber in the presence of Mr Misau and the constitution Review team that copies of the reviewed documents needed to be made available to the Rotuma Island Council and the Rotuman people to peruse and raise their concerns if any prior to the gazetting.

Finally, there are provisions in the current lands act for compulsory Acquisition of Land by the state. This issue was addressed and the Rotuma Island Council was informed that lands bought by the State were registered as Crown Land period.

Antonio Muaera

Rotuma

Reply to Tomasi Taukave posted in theFT 15/3/13 for the Forum