

I for one have no problem at all with the current interpretation of who is a Rotuman which ***means any person of Rotuman or part Rotuman descent***, period.

For there are enough protections in place in the RLA Part 4 – Dealings, to prevent alienation of Rotuma lands from the indigenous Rotumans unless, of course, these were removed by the RLC.

Thus I believe the foremost issue now for the Council is to ensure that:

- when the AG and the SG are finished with the final touches that copies of both the Acts are sent to the Council
- that the Council will thoroughly discuss the matter with the people of Rotuma and a fine print perusal is made before the RA and the RLA are gazetted, so no Rotuman will have an excuse for being uninformed.

For that's what I'd term a ***consultative process in transparency***.

Also, the Vola ni Kawa Bula is for indigenous Fijians, which involves the one-sided registration according to the paternal lineage.

But as Rotumans, we must all be mindful that Rotuma is just a small island of approximately 21 square miles. Thus, if we assimilate the indigenous Fijians way of registration at birth then we must be aware that there are some clans that are many in numbers but with very little land on their paternal side to accommodate everyone.

Therefore, if someone, whether full or part Rotuman (the percentage does not matter in these days and age of

discrimination), can trace his/her ancestry to a particular clan, they should have access to both paternal and maternal lineages.

Furthermore I did understand what Sosefo Inoke wrote in the Forum and also that of the High Chief of Rewa. Admittedly, in the draft constitution uploaded, there's no specific mention of any protection of the rights of the Rotuma Council and the Rotumans which are the RA and RLA.

But I have to go with what the PM and the AG, who is also the Acting PM, said during the consultative process with the people throughout the country and reported by Maika Bolatiki.

“The Prime Minister had earlier reported that his Government was committed to ensure that iTaukei lands remained protected by law and that no alienation of iTaukei land will take place. Under section (5) of the iTaukei Land Trust Act iTaukei land shall not be alienated, whether by sale, grant, transfer or exchange except to the Crown.”

In all the draft constitution consultations held throughout the country, the Attorney-General, Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum, repeatedly told the people present at the consultations that iTaukei land was well protected in the Bill of Rights. The Government also said amendments could be made to incorporate specific land rights.

“We have already started our joint operation and this will continue in future,” ACP Tudravu said. “There is no place for political liars in the roadmap to democracy put in place by the Bainimarama-led Government.”

He said this new roadmap would see all Fijians living harmoniously and happily in a new and a better Fiji.

PM: Changes to land legislation need three-quarters of Parliament then national referendum

iTaukei land is secure under the new constitution and lies spread by politicians must stop. This was the reaction from Prime Minister [Commodore Voreqe Bainimarama](#), from France yesterday. He had been asked about the interpretation by some politicians on the security of the iTaukei land ownership under the draft constitution. Commodore Bainimarama said some politicians are deliberately misinterpreting sections of the draft constitution to mislead people.

Social Democratic Liberal Party (SODELPA) spokesman on land and former Permanent Secretary, Isireli Koyamaibole, had said the draft constitution has nothing on security of iTaukei land. He said in the 1997 Constitution there was entrenched legislation. This meant that any land changes made must be passed by three-quarters of the House of Representatives and by three-quarters of Senate members appointed by the [Bose Levu Vakaturaga](#). However, Mr Koyamaibole said that under the draft constitution any changes to the iTaukei land legislation can be done by the show of hands in Parliament.

The Prime Minister asked those in SODELPA to read the whole draft constitution and not just sections that fit them for their own political gain through their wrong interpretation. Clarifying the wrong interpretation by [SODELPA](#), he said if a change in the iTaukei land legislation is proposed in Parliament it has to be passed by three-quarters of the members. When this is done, the Prime Minister added, the Electoral Commission will conduct a referendum for all registered voters on the matter. And again for the proposed legislation to then be enacted it required three-quarters majority in the referendum.

Is SODELPA interpreting this section of the draft constitution?" asked Commodore Bainimarama. Surely if they are hiding something from the people, they'll continue to do that when elected to Parliament. Commodore Bainimarama said there is no place for dirty politicians in the new Fiji after the 2014 elections."

Thus I hope that the above excerpts will help to clarify the issues raised by Sosefo and Ro Teimumu Kepa. Otherwise, why do we have the final touches of the Rotuma and the Rotuma Lands Acts being done by the Attorney General and the Solicitor General for Parliament to approve and gazette?

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