

FIJI TRADES UNION CONGRESS

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NATIONAL SECRETARY: Felix Anthony OUR REF: PUB/01 DATE: 25/05/20

Termination of Fiji Airways Employees

The FTUC condemns the decision of Fiji Airways to summarily terminate 758 employees many who have been long serving. These terminations have come without notice nor does it appear that there were sufficient consultations or negotiations with the Union. This is a demonstration of how insensitive the Management is in dealing with such sensitive issues. Of greater concern is that the Management has given employees 48 hours to return all company property. Workers were escorted out of the premises by security personnel after being told of their termination.

This is inhumane treatment of employees. We see the similarity of such action with the termination of 2000 plus workers of WAF last May. These are two Government entities that have treated workers with impunity and total disregard for the laws of Fiji. They seek to hide behind legal technicalities and let matters remain pending in Courts. Almost one year after the termination of WAF workers, no hearing in the Tribunals have taken place in regard to their terminations as of today. It now appears the workers in Fiji Airways will suffer the same fate. The silence of government is unacceptable.

If Fiji Airways was in financial strife because of the Covid 19 pandemic, it ought to have consulted the Union in accordance with the Employment Relations Act and entered into consultations with the Union and entered into an agreement prior to serving termination letters.

The Collective Agreement between Fiji Airways and the Union require Fiji Airways to give 60 days' notice of intended redundancy and to explore all possibilities to avert redundancy. If this is not possible then Fiji Airways has the obligation to pay 1 months' salary to workers with less than

1 year of service. For workers with more than a years' service, workers are entitled to be paid 3months base salary plus 2 weeks' pay for every year of service.

This was totally disregarded by management who simply advised workers that the Board had made the decision. The Board was nowhere to be seen. In fact, Union representatives who attended this morning's meeting (Monday 25th May) were handed their termination letters at the meeting.

Employers such as Fiji Airways cannot and should not take advantage of the current pandemic crisis and summarily terminate workers. Those that have been retained have had their salaries cut by 50% unilaterally. Again, a show of total disregard for the contracts that exist between the Management and the employees.

The FTUC calls upon Government to intervene and stop such unfair, inhumane and unjust behavior of Fiji Airways Management and respect workers' rights and the laws. Fiji Airways has an obligation to respect workers' rights. The Board of Fiji Airways is not exempt from the laws that govern such situations.

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