



Statement By Prime Minister, Hon Laisenia Qarase
2.00pm - Friday 13th January 2006

"I met this morning at Government House with the Acting President, His Excellency Ratu Joni Madraiwiwi. I was accompanied by the Minister for Home Affairs.

"We discussed with His Excellency the situation of the Republic of Fiji Military Forces, and particularly the differences that exist between Government and Commander Voreqe Bainimarama, the head of the Army.

"I am grateful to His Excellency for receiving me with the Minister of Home Affairs, who has ministerial responsibility for Army matters.

"It was agreed at our meeting that as the next step His Excellency is to convene discussions with both myself and the Commander on Monday.

"As we await that meeting, I ask the nation to remain calm.

"Let us take our assurance from the initiative which His Excellency the Acting President has taken and his firm resolve that at the meeting on Monday what will be foremost will be the overall and overriding interests of Fiji.

"The discussions will concentrate on what is best for the country and the need for an environment free of fear and uncertainty.

"We will discuss the maintenance of peace, stability, and law and order, and the importance to that of respect for the rule of law, for the authority of a democratically elected Government, and for the independent role and authority of the Police and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecution in dealing with those implicated with what happened in 2000.

"The discussion is also expected to include the crucial importance of maintaining a calm and stable environment conducive to investment. We cannot create jobs and income opportunities for people without investment. The vitally important tourism industry needs an atmosphere that gives visitors confidence about coming to Fiji for their holidays.

"All these issues are of fundamental concern to the Government and the people."

