



1. Is there any information that military reservists who failed to go to the barracks in the November 2000 mutiny, when called to do so by the military, have been targeted by the current military regime?

Reports on the anti-Bainimarama mutiny of 2 November 2000 focus on the soldiers who instigated it and the military's response; no information was found regarding reservists who failed to report to barracks. Sources suggest that military commander Frank Bainimarama was deeply shaken by the mutiny and took a keen interest in the punishment of the rebel soldiers, but none mentioned reservists or their subsequent treatment by the current regime. One news story described a separate occasion on which many reserve troops did not come to barracks when called – shortly before Bainimarama's December 2006 coup. There was no indication that these men were later punished or targeted by the regime.

The coup

The mutiny of November 2000 was precipitated by a coup led by George Speight, an ethnic Fijian businessman whose business interests had suffered following the 1999 election of the country's first ethnic Indian Prime Minister, Mahendra Chaudhry.¹ On 19 May, Speight led a group of indigenous nationalists in storming Fiji's parliament, taking Prime Minister Chaudhry, many cabinet members and several MPs hostage.² Speight declared himself PM,³ saying he had "reclaimed Fiji for indigenous Fijians".⁴

Within ten days, Bainimarama "moved against Speight and declared martial law"⁵ to "restore calm and stability",⁶ and on 4 July, with no end in sight to the hostage crisis, the military installed an interim administration headed by Laisenia Qarase.⁷ Speight refused to

¹ "Who is George Speight" 2002, *BBC News*, 31 January, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/755130.stm> - Accessed 9 June 2010 – Attachment 1. For a timeline of key events between the 1999 election and the November 2000 mutiny, please see Attachment 2.

² "Background to Fiji's four coups" 2006, *BBC News*, 8 December, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/6209486.stm> - Accessed 1 June 2010 – Attachment 3; "Fiji" 2008, in *The Europa World Yearbook 2008, Vol 1*, New York, Routledge, pp 1729 – 1744 – Attachment 4, p 1731; "Fiji" 2010, in *Political Handbook of the World 2010* (online edition), eds. A Banks, T Muller, W Overstreet & J Isacoff, Washington, CQ Press, pp 477-483, http://library.cqpress.com/phw/phw2010_Fiji - Accessed 3 June 2010 – Attachment 5, p 478.

³ "Fiji" 2010, in *Political Handbook of the World 2010* (online edition), eds. A Banks, T Muller, W Overstreet & J Isacoff, Washington, CQ Press, pp 477-483, http://library.cqpress.com/phw/phw2010_Fiji - Accessed 3 June 2010 – Attachment 5, p 478.

⁴ "Fiji" 2008, in *The Europa World Yearbook 2008, Vol 1*, New York, Routledge, pp 1729 – 1744 – Attachment 4, p 1731.

⁵ "Background to Fiji's four coups" 2006, *BBC News*, 8 December, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/6209486.stm> - Accessed 1 June 2010 – Attachment 3.

⁶ "Fiji" 2008, in *The Europa World Yearbook 2008, Vol 1*, New York, Routledge, pp 1729 – 1744 – Attachment 4, p 1732.

⁷ "Fiji" 2008, in *The Europa World Yearbook 2008, Vol 1*, New York, Routledge, pp 1729 – 1744 – Attachment 4, p 1732.

recognise the administration⁸ and only released the last of the hostages on 13 July, after reaching an agreement with the RFMF for the “election of a new president by [Fijian] tribal leaders”.⁹ Josefa Iloilo, of whom Speight approved, was named interim president soon afterwards.¹⁰

Speight’s victory was short-lived: although he and his gunmen were initially granted amnesty by Bainimarama, they were later arrested and Speight was charged with treason.¹¹

The mutiny

The November 2000 mutiny at the Queen Elizabeth Barracks in Suva was staged largely in response to Bainimarama’s actions against Speight.¹² The mutiny’s instigators, members of the army’s special “Counter Revolutionary Warfare unit”¹³, were Speight loyalists who had supported the May 2000 coup.¹⁴ According to the *Europa World Yearbook*, they planned to “assassinate Bainimarama and...liberate...Speight”, who was by that time in jail awaiting trial.¹⁵ Bainimarama narrowly escaped and, with the assistance of troops loyal to him, “retook the barracks following an eight-hour assault in which five rebels and four loyal soldiers were killed”.¹⁶

Military response

In the wake of the mutiny, surviving rebel soldiers and suspected collaborators were treated harshly by the RFMF. Reports indicate that many of the arrested rebel troops were beaten,¹⁷ and up to five were bashed to death.¹⁸ The captain accused of leading the mutiny

⁸ “Fiji” 2008, in *The Europa World Yearbook 2008, Vol 1*, New York, Routledge, pp 1729 – 1744 – Attachment 4, p 1732.

⁹ “Fiji” 2010, in *Political Handbook of the World 2010* (online edition), eds. A Banks, T Muller, W Overstreet & J Isacoff, Washington, CQ Press, pp 477-483, http://library.cqpress.com/phw/phw2010_Fiji - Accessed 3 June 2010 – Attachment 5, p 478.

¹⁰ “Fiji” 2010, in *Political Handbook of the World 2010* (online edition), eds. A Banks, T Muller, W Overstreet & J Isacoff, Washington, CQ Press, pp 477-483, http://library.cqpress.com/phw/phw2010_Fiji - Accessed 3 June 2010 – Attachment 5, 478; “Fiji” 2008, in *The Europa World Yearbook 2008, Vol 1*, New York, Routledge, pp 1729 – 1744 – Attachment 4, p 1732.

¹¹ “Fiji” 2008, in *The Europa World Yearbook 2008, Vol 1*, New York, Routledge, pp 1729 – 1744 – Attachment 4, p 1732; “No amnesty for Fiji rebels” 2000, *BBC News*, 2 October, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/952262.stm> - Accessed 7 June 2010 – Attachment 6. Speight was ultimately sentenced to life in prison: see “Fiji coup leader George Speight has death sentence reduced to life in prison” 2002, *The Independent*, 18 February, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/fiji-coup-leader-george-speight-has-death-sentence-reduced-to-life-in-prison-661160.html> - Accessed 7 June 2010 – Attachment 7.

¹² Amnesty International 2000, “Fiji: Human Rights at Risk”, 9 November, <http://asiapacific.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGASA180092000?open&of=ENG-FJI> - Accessed 3 June 2010 – Attachment 8.

¹³ Amnesty International 2000, “Fiji: Human Rights at Risk”, 9 November, <http://asiapacific.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGASA180092000?open&of=ENG-FJI> - Accessed 3 June 2010 – Attachment 8.

¹⁴ “Background to Fiji’s four coups” 2006, *BBC News*, 8 December, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/6209486.stm> - Accessed 1 June 2010 – Attachment 3; “Trial in Fiji told mutiny aimed at removing military commander” 2004, *Radio New Zealand*, 2 November, <http://www.rnzi.com/pages/news.php?op=read&id=12993> - Accessed 3 June 2010 – Attachment 9.

¹⁵ “Fiji” 2008, in *The Europa World Yearbook 2008, Vol 1*, New York, Routledge, pp 1729 – 1744 – Attachment 4, p 1732-1733.

¹⁶ “Fiji” 2008, in *The Europa World Yearbook 2008, Vol 1*, New York, Routledge, pp 1729 – 1744 – Attachment 4, p 1732.

¹⁷ Amnesty International 2000, “Fiji: Human Rights at Risk”, 9 November, <http://asiapacific.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGASA180092000?open&of=ENG-FJI> - Accessed 3 June 2010 – Attachment 8; Kerney S & M McKenna 2006, “Soldier killings in 2000 led to coup”, *The Australian*, 9 December, <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/nation/soldier-killings-in-2000-led-to-coup/story-e6frg6nf-111112658909> – Accessed 2 June 2010 – Attachment 10.

was eventually sentenced to life imprisonment, while other participants received “lesser sentences”.¹⁹ Bainimarama, who was reportedly deeply shaken by his near-death in the mutiny,²⁰ “criticized the majority of the sentences for being too lenient”.²¹

In a further demonstration of his interest in seeing the rebels punished, following the Qarase government’s 2005 proposal to enact legislation pardoning those who were involved in the 2000 coup and mutiny, Bainimarama threatened to stage a coup himself.²² He made good on that threat on 5 December 2006.²³ Commentators have suggested that an additional motivation for the coup was Bainimarama’s desire to end a police probe into the RFMF killings of the mutinous soldiers – for which he was suspected of being at least partly responsible.²⁴

Reservists

Reports on the mutiny located for this research response do not mention reservists, and no information was found regarding reserve troops who failed to respond to a call to barracks in November 2000. However, one report was found on a separate call-up of reserve forces. The *Fiji Times* reported that many reservists did not assemble at barracks as ordered prior to Bainimarama’s December 2006 coup. An army spokesman told the newspaper that “of the 3000 reserve soldiers, less than 1000” had come in.²⁵ ANU academic Jon Fraenkel also commented on this “poor turnout of reservists called into the army camps shortly before the coup”, saying it “indicated some lack of enthusiasm”.²⁶ No follow-up reports were found to indicate that “no-shows” were punished or targeted by the regime.

¹⁸ Callinan, R 2006, “Chief on the run”, *Time Magazine*, 10 December, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1568506,00.html> - Accessed 7 June 2010 – Attachment 11; see US State Department 2001, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2000: Fiji*, February – Attachment 12.

¹⁹ “Fiji” 2008, in *The Europa World Yearbook 2008, Vol 1*, New York, Routledge, pp 1729 – 1744 – Attachment 4, p 1732.

²⁰ Callinan, R 2006, “Chief on the run”, *Time Magazine*, 10 December, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1568506,00.html> - Accessed 7 June 2010 – Attachment 11; see also, Firth S & J Frankael 2009, “The Fiji military and ethno-nationalism: Analyzing the paradox”, in *The 2006 Military Takeover in Fiji – A Coup to End All Coups?* Eds J Fraenkel, S Firth and B Lal, Canberra, ANU E-press, pp 117-137 – Attachment 13, p 124.

²¹ “Fiji” 2008, in *The Europa World Yearbook 2008, Vol 1*, New York, Routledge, pp 1729 – 1744 – Attachment 4, p 1732.

²² Fraenkel, J 2009 “Fiji’s December 2006 coup: Who, what, where and why?” in *The 2006 Military Takeover in Fiji – A Coup to End All Coups?* Eds J Fraenkel, S Firth and B Lal, Canberra, ANU E-press, pp 43-66 – Attachment 14.

²³ Fraenkel, J 2009 “Fiji’s December 2006 coup: Who, what, where and why?” in *The 2006 Military Takeover in Fiji – A Coup to End All Coups?* Eds J Fraenkel, S Firth and B Lal, Canberra, ANU E-press, pp 43-66 – Attachment 14, p 46; “Fiji” 2010, in *Political Handbook of the World 2010* (online edition), eds. A Banks, T Muller, W Overstreet & J Isacoff, Washington, CQ Press, pp 477-483, http://library.cqpress.com/phw/phw2010_Fiji - Accessed 3 June 2010 – Attachment 5, p 479.

²⁴ Callinan, R 2006, “Chief on the run”, *Time Magazine*, 10 December, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1568506,00.html> - Accessed 7 June 2010 – Attachment 11; “Justice denied: CRW widows cry foul” 2007, *Fiji Times*, February 25, <http://www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?ref=archive&id=57711> – Accessed 2 June 2010 – Attachment 15, Kerney S & M McKenna 2006, “Soldier killings in 2000 led to coup”, *The Australian*, 9 December, <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/nation/soldier-killings-in-2000-led-to-coup/story-e6frg6nf-111112658909> – Accessed 2 June 2010 – Attachment 10.

²⁵ “Poor turnout by Fiji reserve soldiers” 2006, *The Fiji Times Online*, 28 November <http://www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?id=52438> – Accessed 21 August 2008 – Attachment 16.

²⁶ Fraenkel, J 2009 “Fiji’s December 2006 coup: Who, what, where and why?” in *The 2006 Military Takeover in Fiji – A Coup to End All Coups?* Eds J Fraenkel, S Firth and B Lal, Canberra, ANU E-press, pp 43-66 – Attachment 14, p 53.

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8. Amnesty International 2000, "Fiji: Human Rights at Risk", 9 November, <http://asiapacific.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGASA180092000?open&of=ENG-FJI> - Accessed 3 June 2010.
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