

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/fiji-two-women-journalists-threatened-11-09-2014,46928.html>

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Asia - Fiji

Death threats

## Two women journalists threatened during Fiji election campaign

11 September 2014

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Their coverage of TV debate cancellation prompts threatening phone calls and Facebook threats

Political reporters covering Fiji's first parliamentary election campaign since a coup d'état in 2006 are being subjected to threats and intimidation on a scale comparable only to what is at stake in the election.

Two women journalists – **Vosita Kotowasawasa** of the *Fiji Broadcasting Corporation (FBC)* and **Jyoti Pratibha** of the *Fiji Sun* newspaper – received death threats on 9 September over their previous day's coverage of the cancellation of a live TV debate between the leading contenders for the post of prime minister.

According to [Pacific.Scoop](#), a news website affiliated to the [Pacific Media Centre](#), Kotowasawasa received several threatening phone calls while Pratibha was threatened via fake Facebook user profiles.

Both had covered the previous day's last-minute decision by Teimumu Vuikaba Kepa, the head of the Social Democratic Liberal Party (SODELPA), to pull out of the debate with interim Prime Minister Josaia Voreqe "Frank" Bainimarama.

"*We condemn all forms of intimidation of journalists,*" said Benjamin Ismail, the head of the Reporters Without Borders Asia-Pacific desk, and David Robie, the head of the Pacific Media Centre.

"*Supporters of the various political parties may disagree with journalists and their coverage of events but threatening comments must be punished. The self-censorship generated by these threats seriously endangers the democratic process in these first parliamentary elections.*"

The *Fiji Broadcasting Corporation* said it was working with Telecom Fiji to trace the threatening calls. The *Fiji Sun* said it was doing its own investigation in a bid to identify those behind the fake Facebook profiles

Pratibha told the *Fiji Sun*: "I will not be intimidated or cowed by cowards who use fake profiles to threaten us."

Ranked 107th out of 180 countries in the [2014 Reporters Without Borders press freedom index](#), Fiji is due to undergo a Universal Periodic Review by the UN Human Rights Council next month.

In a [joint submission to the Human Rights Council](#), Reporters Without Borders and the Pacific Media Centre have recommended a constitutional amendment and adoption of a freedom of information law.

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