

PRESS STATEMENT FROM THE ACTING CHIEF REGISTRAR, HIGH COURT OF FIJI ON ALLEGATIONS MADE OUT BY THE LAW SOCIETY REGARDING MY CONDUCT DURING THE OBTAINING OF UNRESOLVED COMPLAINT FILES FROM THE FIJI LAW SOCIETY PREMISES ON 23RD MAY, 2009.

It is of a serious concern that the Fiji Law Society (the Society) through its President Mr. Dor Sami Naidu has seen it fit to disseminate a correspondence regarding allegations of “disgraceful and unprofessional conduct” on my part into the public domain without having the need to ensure that the same correspondence was first received and acknowledged by me or the Office of the Chief Registrar and further giving me an opportunity to respond prior to dissemination. There appears to be a very personal, deliberate and desperate attempt to discredit me and the Office which I currently hold. To date the Office of the Chief Registrar has not received nor sighted any official correspondence addressed to the Chief Registrar in which the society raises its concern regarding the above-said allegations.

The only form of correspondence ever sighted by me is a faxed copy of the relevant correspondence forwarded to me by Radio New Zealand International by journalist Joanne O’Brien. This is how this matter first came to my knowledge. I trust that this is indeed the content of the correspondence that carries the allegations of “disgraceful and unprofessional conduct” on my part.

The **Legal Practitioners Decree 2009** (the Decree) came into force on the **22nd May 2009** and replaces the **Legal Practitioners Act 1997**. The Decree bestows upon the Chief Registrar certain powers, duties, responsibilities, and obligations. One of these is, as per **section 131(a) of the Decree**, immediately upon the commencement of the Decree, to obtain from the Fiji Law Society or the Secretary of the Society (Secretary) any complaint made to the Society against Legal Practitioners not finally disposed of at the commencement of the Decree. The Decree refers to these files as “**unresolved complaints**” (unresolved complaint files). **On the 23rd May 2009**, I obtained all unresolved complaint files from the Society premises. The Secretary of the Society was present at the time these files were taken. She had verified the files and we both ensured that no other item was removed from the Office except those covered under **section 131 (a) of the Decree**.

I was very polite, courteous and maintained decorum at all times. I did not threaten nor exert any force of any manner or form on anyone including the Secretary at any given time. There is no exclusion provision in the Decree that prohibits me from carrying out this exercise on a weekend. Therefore the question of “timing” is immaterial. The decree empowers the Chief Registrar to enter the premises of the Society to obtain these files. The Decree does not impose a legal obligation on the Chief Registrar to give notice to the Secretary or Society.

I strongly object to the misleading, exaggerated and drama like allegations of “disgraceful and unprofessional conduct” on my part. I complied with the decree and deny any wrongdoing.

Incidentally, has anyone from the Society from the President, Vice President or Council members down divulged to you as to whether any of the complaints might involve themselves personally?.

6.6.2009