

PRESS RELEASE



Picture caption: From left: Fiji Truth and Reconciliation Commissioners Sekove Naqiolevu, Rajendra Dass, Father Iowane Sigarara, UNICEF Chief Child Protection Michael Copland, FTRC Consultant Elizabeth Krishna, FTRC Commissioners Ana Laqeretabua, Rachna Nath and UNICEF Mental Health Specialist Koen Sevenants on May 5, 2025.
Photo: Fiji Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Fiji TRC Lays Groundwork for Trauma-Informed Processes and Support Services

Wednesday, 7 May 2025: The Fiji Truth and Reconciliation Commission (FTRC) on Monday commenced discussions with key partners to lay the foundation for its trauma-informed processes and services.

These consultations reaffirm the Commission's commitment to embedding a trauma-informed approach across all aspects of its work, with a strong emphasis on the critical role of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) in its engagement with survivors, staff, and affected communities.

As the Commission carries out its mandate to uncover truth, foster reconciliation, and promote accountability, it is placing healing, dignity, and wellbeing at the heart of its process.

Through the integration of trauma-informed principles, the Commission seeks to ensure that survivors are treated with sensitivity, their experiences respectfully acknowledged, and their participation supported through appropriate care and safeguards.

"The Commission's work is not just about uncovering facts - it is about restoring trust, validating lived experiences, and ensuring survivors are heard without being harmed in the process," said the Commission.

"Our trauma-informed practices and access to psychosocial support are foundational to building a meaningful and inclusive path forward," the Commission noted.

During the meeting, participants from UNICEF Chief Child Protection Michael Copland, UNICEF Mental Health Specialist Koen Sevenants, Father Iwane Siganara, and FTRC Consultant Elizabeth Krishna discussed the Commission's plans to make MHPSS services available through partnerships with community-based organisations and qualified mental health professionals.

These services are intended to help individuals engage safely with the Commission's work - whether through testimony, public hearings, or community dialogue - while minimising retraumatisation.

The FTRC also encouraged the public and media to be mindful of the emotional impact the Commission's work may have on survivors and to help foster spaces of empathy, care, and respect.

Ms Krishna described the meeting as a deeply meaningful experience.

"The discussions were open and respectful, allowing us to freely express our views and explore the way forward," Ms Krishna said.

"I was able to contribute through my experience in reconciliation work in Fiji since the 1987 coup, focusing on inter-ethnic relations, inter-religious dialogue, trauma healing, and reconciliation."

She noted the approachable and respectful manner of the Commissioners, adding: "The commissioners were very down-to-earth and helpful, fostering a deep sense of listening and respect among us."

Ms Krishna emphasised that she left the meeting feeling both fulfilled and more confident in her role, with a clearer understanding of the FTRC's trauma-informed strategy.

"I'm hopeful that more people will join this process, and I'm optimistic that it will bring healing to many of our people," she said.

"We need to be open to the process and the spaces provided, entering them with an open mind."

The FTRC will continue engaging partners and communities in the development of its trauma-informed services as it prepares for the next phase of its work.

About FTRC:

The FTRC is an independent entity set up for truth-telling, reconciliation, and national healing. The mandate of the FTRC is to examine past political upheavals and their impact on people's lives. The Commission is looking at the physical and emotional harm, loss of life and property, and systemic injustices on people.

The purpose of this work is to foster unity and social cohesion in a society where everyone feels safe, equal, included and able to thrive. The Commission seeks to honour the lived experiences of survivors by providing a platform for voices to be heard, validated, and acknowledged.

The Commission emphasises that truth-telling is not about retribution. It is about recognition, healing, to ensure that history is not repeated. Through reconciliation, the Commission aims to build a stronger, more just, and peaceful Fiji for future generations.

Note: The Commission is encouraging members of the public to contact us in relation to any of the above. We look forward to hearing from you. Reach us by phone, email, or through our Facebook page, where a contact form is also available.

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Source: Fiji Truth and Reconciliation Commission

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