



Development Economist Dr Asaeli Tuibeqa Highlights the Economic Impacts of the Political Upheaval at Fiji TRC Hearing

2026: The Fiji Truth and Reconciliation Commission (FTRC) convened an expert hearing on Thursday in Suva which was focused on the impacts of the political upheavals on Fiji's economy.

Appearing before the FTRC chairman Joaquim Da Fonseca, Commissioners Rachna Nath, and Ana Laqeretabua, Dr Asaeli Tuibeqa – a development economist and Fiji National University (FNU) Dean of the College of Business, Hospitality and Tourism Studies - shared his professional insights and findings into Fiji's political history, particularly how the past periods of political upheavals have contributed to long-standing structural and institutional challenges for the country.

Dr Tuibeqa, who is also engaged as the Commission's sectoral economy chapter writer, said the repeated political upheavals had fundamentally reshaped Fiji's economic trajectory, creating what he described as a "coup gap" that weakened both economic performance and public institutions over time.

"Each political crisis created economic setbacks that Fiji never fully recovered from before the next disruption occurred," he said.

He further described the lasting impact of instability as having “weakened Fiji’s immune system” in terms of resilience, governance, and institutional strength.

During the hearing he called for a shift in national leadership culture, stressing the need for leaders who can guide the country toward healing and long-term prosperity.

“We need leaders that take us to heal and prosper. We need leaders that have foresight, strategic thinking, and active listening in our country,” he said.

He added that the country requires leadership that is grounded in both capability and identity.

“We need a leader who carries the culture and who carries the command,” Dr Tuibeqa added.

During the hearing, he also explained how political instability lowered investor confidence, weakened governance systems, and disrupted consistent policymaking, leading to long-term damage to institutions and the government’s ability to function effectively.

He further explained that repeated political upheavals accelerated the migration of skilled professionals in sectors such as health, education, engineering, and public administration.

“The loss of skilled labour continues to affect Fiji’s ability to build resilience and sustain long-term development,” he said.

Dr Tuibeqa noted that the country’s dependence on tourism and exposure to external shocks continue to create economic vulnerabilities, particularly during periods of political uncertainty.

He concluded the hearing by recommending stronger institutions, improved governance, economic diversification, and targeted investment in human capital development to support long-term stability and inclusive growth.

“Building resilience requires political stability, institutional trust, and an economy that creates opportunities for all communities,” Dr Tuibeqa said.

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 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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