



Dawasamu Leaders Call for Truth, Accountability and Reconciliation to Heal Lasting Divisions



From left: Fiji Truth and Reconciliation Commission Commissioner Ana Laqeretabua, Chairperson Joaquim Fonseca, Turaga na Ratu of Dawasamu, Ratu Alivereti Wesikana, former Fiji Police Force Special Constable Moses Waqavolau and Commissioner Sekove Naqiolevu after the hearing in Suva. **Photo: Fiji Truth and Reconciliation Commission.**

2026: A once-close relationship between iTaukei villagers and Indo-Fijian farmers in Dawasamu was fractured by the unrest surrounding the 2000 coup, leaving divisions that

community leaders say continue to affect the Vanua more than two decades later and reinforce the need for truth, accountability, and reconciliation.

Appearing before the Fiji Truth and Reconciliation Commission (FTRC) during a joint hearing in Suva, Turaga na Ratu of Dawasamu, Ratu Alivereti Wesikana, and his cousin, Mosese Waqavolau, a former Special Constable with the Fiji Police Force, reflected on the lasting effects of the violence, intimidation, and social disruption experienced in Tailevu during the 2000 coup.

The hearing was presided over by FTRC Commissioners Sekove Naqiolevu accompanied by Commissioner Ana Laqeretabua and Chairperson Joaquim da Fonseca.

Ratu Alivereti spoke of a period before the 2000 upheaval when relationships between iTaukei villagers and Indo-Fijian farmers in Dawasamu were built on cooperation, mutual respect, and economic interdependence. He said the events of 2000 disrupted those relationships and created divisions that continue to affect the community today.

“The community continues to carry the burden of past wrongdoing,” Ratu Alivereti stated. “*Sa rauta*, the coup should never happen again.”

He added that many individuals involved in the events continue to struggle with guilt and regret, while unresolved tensions have affected participation in community life and collective development efforts.

He called for continued dialogue between affected communities, greater support for community-based reconciliation processes, and initiatives that promote healing, forgiveness, and mutual understanding.

At the same hearing, Mr Waqavolau, a traditional chief from Dawasamu and former police officer, recounted responding to incidents of violence and unrest during the crisis, including assisting families affected by attacks and attempting to maintain public order amid widespread instability.

“I was carrying out my duties and trying to maintain peace and order during a very difficult time,” Mr Waqavolau explained.

He described being assaulted on separate occasions while performing his duties and said the injuries he sustained ultimately contributed to his resignation from the Fiji Police Force on medical advice.

Highlighting the importance of learning from the past, he warned, “Future generations must understand the cost of violence and lawlessness so that these experiences are never repeated.”

Both witnesses told the Commission that the upheaval weakened community trust, undermined traditional and state institutions, and left lasting social consequences that continue to be felt today.

They also acknowledged a recent Talanoa with Mr da Fonseca, describing it as an important opportunity to discuss the role of truth-telling, healing, and reconciliation in addressing unresolved issues within communities.

“Lasting reconciliation requires acknowledgement of past wrongs, accountability, and honest dialogue,” they affirmed.

The two leaders called for continued truth-telling, stronger support for victims and frontline responders, community-led reconciliation initiatives, and a collective commitment to healing, forgiveness, respect for lawful authority, and national unity.

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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