

PUBLIC

AI Index: ASA 18/02/00

22 May 2000

Further information on UA 49/00 (ASA 18/01/00, 19 May 2000) - Fear for safety/fear of ill-treatment

FIJI Mahendra Chaudhry, Prime Minister
Adi Koila Mara Nailatiku (daughter of President Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara),
At least 26 Government Members of Parliament, including
Dr. Tupeni Baba, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Joeli Kalau,
parliamentary whip and Vice-President of the African, Caribbean,
Pacific - European Union (ACP-EU) Joint Assembly

Rajendra Chaudhry: no longer feared "disappeared"

The leader of the gunmen holding Members of Parliament (MPs) and others in the parliament buildings said on 20 May that he would start executing them if President Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara did not resign, according to President Ratu Kamisese himself.

More than 20 people have been released since Saturday, including MPs, some of whom said they had been forced to sign statements of resignation.

Rajendra Chaudhry, who was feared to have "disappeared", has been seen among those still held by the gunmen. Government officials have confirmed that he has been seen with a black eye.

Prime Minister Mahendra Chaudhry has reportedly collapsed after being beaten over the weekend. He was seen today being dragged from a building into public view and having a gun held to his head. George Speight, who has attempted to assume executive control, has acknowledged that the Prime Minister was beaten, saying a group of indigenous Fijians was responsible. Chaudhry was denied medical attention at first, but has now been seen by two doctors, who have reportedly not returned home since they were allowed into the parliamentary complex on 21 May.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English or your own language to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in your country, urging them to use their influence to ensure that:

- all those held in the parliament buildings are safely released and not ill-treated while held;
- pending their release they are provided with full access to medical treatment for any injuries already sustained.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of Foreign Affairs in your own country

COPIES TO:

diplomatic representatives of Fiji accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 19 June 2000.