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Fiji reform process flawed

The independent group set up to review Fiji's constitution needs to take urgent measures to ensure women and young people are able to fully participate in the process, Amnesty International said on Monday.

A women's youth group, the Emerging Leaders Forum Alumni, was prevented from giving verbal evidence to the Constitutional Commission on Saturday.

Kate Schuetze, Pacific Researcher at Amnesty International, said:

"This strikes at the heart of the credibility of the Constitutional Commission. If people are denied the opportunity to fully participate in the process then it undermines any future constitution. It is essential that women and young people are fully involved in establishing the new constitution so that it reflects their vision for the country as well as protects their rights."

"The Commission needs to urgently ensure all public consultations are inclusive, meaningful and transparent. It is the Commission's responsibility to ensure there's adequate time for this to happen."

"Widespread censorship remains in Fiji and Amnesty International urges the government to lift these restrictions on freedom of expression."

ENDS