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population per sq km



Fiji Today

Coup-coup Land

Since the 2006 military coup, Commodore Frank Bainimarama has strengthened his power base and attempted to legitimise his position as Fiji's rightful prime minister in a series of complex political manoeuvres. In 2009 when the Court of Appeal declared Bainimarama's interim government illegal, Commodore Bainimarama and his entire government immediately stepped down so that President Iloilo was free to appoint 'a distinguished person' as caretaker prime minister.

President Iloilo then surprised everyone – well, perhaps not Bainimarama – when he then promptly dismissed the Court of Appeal, suspended the constitution and declared a new legal order with himself as Fiji's new head of state. His first order of business: to reinstate Bainimarama as interim prime minister, who in turn reinstated his cabinet. The shuffle effectively restored Commodore Frank Bainimarama to power while removing the previous barriers restricting his governance.

A Little Less Conversation

In early 2012 the Public Emergency Regulations (PER), which had been put in place during the 2009 political turmoil, were lifted. These regulations restricted people's freedom of speech, freedom of assembly and freedom of the media. Despite the abolishment of the PER, new public order decrees continue to oppress political opposition and Bainimarama continues to be labelled as a dictator by international press and his detractors. For his part, Bainimarama insists he's only doing what's necessary to stamp out the corruption and systemic racism that characterised previous governments. He's said it before (in 2010) and he'll undoubtedly say it again, he's 'committed to free and fair elections'. It's just the date that's proving tricky to pin down. Recently 2014 has been earmarked as the year Fiji returns to democracy.

Sport

Fijians are fanatical about sports and their fondness for rugby union, the most popular game in the country, crosses many of the racial and cultural divides so evident elsewhere in Fijian society. The Fijian rugby sevens team is one of the most

successful sevens teams in the world and a considerable source of national pride. The 'Flying Fijians' have won two Sevens World Cup titles, a number of Hong Kong Sevens titles and the 2005/06 IRB Sevens World Series.

Press

From April 2009 until late 2011 the government's infamous PER laws led to censorship across all major newsrooms, while during the 1987 coup the *Fiji Times* famously published a newspaper with large blank spaces to high-light censored articles.

Fiji is an archipelago of 332 islands and a further 500 smaller islets covering a total area of more than 1.3 million sq km, with a land area of 18,300 sq km.