



UK Mission to the
United Nations
in Geneva

Matthew Buckley

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**United Kingdom of Great Britain & Northern Ireland
National Statement**

**Universal Periodic Review – Fiji
October 2014**

Thank you Mr President,

The UK thanks Fiji for its participation in the UPR process. We recognise progress since the last review, most notably the holding of national elections and reestablishment of Parliament. These are crucial steps towards full democracy.

We are concerned that restrictions upon NGOs prevented them from playing a meaningful role in election activities. We urge the Government to engage constructively with NGOs, ensuring they can operate freely.

We are pleased that formal press censorship has ended and press freedom increased during the election. However we are concerned the Media Decree, which carries heavy penalties, including prison sentences, has resulted in self-censorship, undermining freedom of expression. The UK welcomes the lifting of the Public Emergency Regulations, but regrets these measures were replaced by an amended Public Order Decree that continues to limit freedom of association and expression.

We welcome Fiji's commitment to ratify the Convention Against Torture. But we are concerned allegations of human rights abuses by security forces, including the use of torture, have failed to result in prosecution. We note positively the increase in female MPs, but remain concerned women are still underrepresented, and face unacceptably high levels of violence.

We have two recommendations:

1. Ensure all alleged cases of human rights violations by security forces are investigated urgently and transparently, with those held responsible brought to trial swiftly; and
2. Review and amend or repeal as necessary all decrees limiting freedom of expression and association, particularly the Media, Essential National Industries and Public Order Decrees.