

I was surfing Facebook when I came across Mojito Mua's call for Rotumans to read the Bills in the website which I did.

My response is in two parts.

1. **To support the petition by Sosefo Inoke and the Rotuman community of Queensland and**
2. To vent my bitter disappointment at the Review Committee. For ignoring the Council's request (Antonio Mauera RW 17/3/13) for the final drafts to be referred back to the Council and the community for further consultation similar to the Constitution, before the Bills are tabled in Parliament. Unfortunately no consultations were made when there are several glaring anomalies with the Bills that:
 - (a) Affect the ownership of our waters and reefs which were left out in the interpretation of Rotuma **[B6 s1 (2) & LB7 s14 (b) (1)]** that impinges on our fishing and royalty rights under **s30** of the Constitution.
 - (b) Overlap the functions of the Council and the Forum (**B6 s6 & s7**). But afford the Forum the opportunity **[B6 s8 (8)]** to abuse and infringe our Bill of Rights and also allows an outsider the final power to decide the election and dismissal of our chiefs **[B6 s11 (2)]**.
 - (c) Shrewdly aligns our clan land registrations to the iTaukeis' Vola ni Kawa Bula (**LB7 s26**).
 - (d) Allows brothers and male cousins to discriminate against a sister that marries a non Rotuman to split up our family units **[B7 s26 (1)]** contrary to the Right to Equality and Freedom from Discrimination under **s26** of the Constitution. .
 - (e) Negate the need for clan lands to revert to our customary laws but under (**LB7 S15**).
 - (f) Overlook the Commission and the Council to give the power of consent to the DO (**LB7 s16**).

Certainly it's a mistake for Rotumans to allow the Bills to be passed as are without further consultations and amendments made! The Bills as are have done away with some of our basic traditions and ownership rights especially that of our economic zone around Rotuma. The iTaukeis are allowed their traditions fishing rights, the *qoliqolis* but not Rotumans!

Our culture and traditions are important to each and every Rotuman. Without these we'll lose our identity and eventually become an extinct race! That's why these are listed by the UN as endangered and certainly cannot afford the Bills, shoved on us to further erode these. Hence why we need the ownership of all our resources (including our lands, waters and the sky) and the ability to manage our traditions according to our customary laws and the Constitution without outside interference of the DO and the Commission Eastern.

Therefore it is imperative that the community seriously think on these lines and **unite in supporting Sosefo Inoke and the Queensland community who cared enough to petition the MPs on all our behalves. To have the Bills referred back to the Council and the community for further consultation and amendments before they are re-tabled in Parliament. I cannot stress enough the need for unity of the whole community behind Sosefo and the Queensland community for the petition to carry more weight by signing the petition before 6/7/15 and forwarding it to Sosefo for redirection. For united we stand and divided we fall and my plea to the Fiji Rotuma Association and also to every Rotuman out there who cares about Rotuma and all our future generations to support the petition and not leave such important issues to the brave few!**

Rotuma 'oan pa'u and I hope the Honourable Minister for Employment, George Konrote will assist us in this regard too in Parliament when the time comes on 6/7/15.

Otherwise it may be time to have a referendum for our future to put in place a time frame and a plan with Tuvalu as guide. For time is at hand when most Rotumans won't be able to find jobs like our parents did, given the latest registered unemployed figures of 46,272 that includes almost 5K university graduates. This will further increase by more than 12K high school leavers and more graduates at the end of the year.