

**Ref Rotuma Bill 2015 (Bill no. 6 of 2015)**  
**Rotuma Lands Act 2015 (Bill no. 7 of 2015)**

I am a Rotuman living in Brisbane. where we recently had our Annual Rotuman Community Meeting at which the topic of the two Rotuma Bills referenced above were discussed.

I was surprised by some of the changes contained in the Bills that violate our Rotuman Customs and Traditions. I would like to know why a comprehensive review was not done and published by the Government before it was tabled to be pushed through the next sitting of Parliament in early July. Such important legislation should be reviewed comprehensively by the Rotuman Community before it is tabled in Parliament.

I believe that not many Rotumans are aware of the two Bills or have not read the Bills properly to fully understand some of the changes the Government is proposing that are contrary to the Customs and Traditions of our Rotuman culture.

My personal involvement is because of my grandchildren. My son's children from a non-Rotuman will be able to claim a *hanua ne kainaga* (clan-owned lands) but my daughter's children from a non-Rotuman cannot lay claim to our *hanua ne kainaga*.  
Rotuma Lands Act 2015 (Part 5 Section 26)

My wish has always been that my children, grandchildren, and so on, will be able to return to Rotuma proudly knowing that, yes they do have a *hanua* to go to. They may not live there but they have a sense of belonging to our beloved Rotuma.

Time is running out for us Rotumans and we need to stop and defer the Bills from being passed.

Below is my petition circulated to All the Ministries of the Fiji Government Website requesting to stop and defer the two Rotuma Bills currently before Parliament so that they can be reviewed and scrutinised properly by the Rotuman Community.

I ask ALL Rotumans to read the two Bills and discuss with Family and Friends and also comment and/or dispute any of the Statements in my Petition below and what future ramifications this will have for our Rotuman Community.

Copies of the Bills can be accessed from the Rotuma Website  
<http://www.rotuma.net/os/whatsnew.htm>

Any Rotumans or Friends with expertise in Rotuman Customs, Traditions and Social Values, Please help us to Stop and Defer the two Bills.

If you agree, Please petition your Member of Parliament to Stop and Defer the passing of these two Bills and have them referred to a wider Group of Rotumans with knowledge of our Rotuman Customs and Traditions.

Lolomas and Moce  
Hanisiof Joe Atu - Brisbane, Australia.

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**Below is my Petition to the Fiji Government through the Fiji Government Website.**

I am a Rotuman living in Brisbane and I have three children, two have children from non-Rotumans. I am concerned that the Rotuma Lands Act 2015 will discriminate against my daughter and her children who are my grandchildren.

My son's children from a non-Rotuman will be able to claim a *hanua ne kainaga* (clan owned lands) but my daughters children from a non-Rotuman cannot lay claim to our *hanua ne kainaga* (clan owned lands).

This and other discrepancies are listed in my petition below.

My humble request is to seek your assistance to stop and defer the Bills from passing into Law and to have a comprehensive review with the Rotuman community.

Lolomas and Moce  
Hanisiof Joe Atu

**PETITION**

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**TO:**

1. The Honourable Mr Voreqe Bainimarama, Prime Minister and Minister Responsible for Rotuma;
2. The Honourable Mr Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum, Attorney General and Minister for Justice;
3. The Honourable Members of the Government side of the House of Representatives; and
4. The Honourable Members of the Opposition;

**THIS PETITION** of the undersigned Rotumans and Friends of Rotumans, **HUMBLY ASKS** you to **STOP AND DEFER** the tabling, reading or further reading and the **PASSING INTO LAW** of the two current Bills before the Parliament with respect to Rotuma and Rotumans, namely, **ROTUMA BILL 2015** (Bill no. 6 of 2015) and **ROTUMA LANDS BILL 2015** (Bill no. 7 of 2015),

**UNTIL** these Bills have been fully and widely discussed by and amongst the Rotumans in Rotuma, Fiji and elsewhere,

**SO THAT** they can give their **FULL AND INFORMED CONSENT TO BE GOVERNED BY THESE LAWS** as **IT IS THEIR RIGHT** under your **CONSTITUTION** and

**INTERNATIONAL LAW and THEIR OBLIGATIONS TO ALL ROTUMANS NOW AND IN THE FUTURE,**

**FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS:**

**WE are concerned that:**

**(A)** In respect of the **ROTUMA BILL 2015** (Bill no. 6 of 2015):

1. The **definition of Rotuma** now differs from the current law in that the new definition does not include “its dependencies, rocks, reefs and fisheries lying between the twelfth degree and the fifteenth degree of south latitude and between the one hundred and seventy-fifth degree and the one hundred and eightieth degree of east longitude from the meridian of Greenwich”;
2. The **administration and governance** of Rotuma differs from the current law in that the new law proposes administration and governance by a new body called the FORUM OF THE ROTUMAN PEOPLE and a differently constituted Council of Rotuma;
3. The **appointment and dismissal of Rotuman Chiefs** in the proposed law does not accord with Rotuman customs and traditions and differs significantly from the current law;
4. A Review Committee was appointed to review the existing Act but the appointment of
5. the members of that Committee and its deliberations have not been publicized; and

**(B)** In respect of the **ROTUMA LANDS BILL 2015** (Bill no. 7 of 2015):

1. The provisions of s 26 dealing with the transmission of land rights on the birth or death of Rotumans in respect of *hanua ne kainaga* (clan owned lands) do not accord with Rotuman customs and traditions, discriminates against Rotuman women, do not comply with your Constitution or International Law and are arbitrary;
2. The other provisions dealing with the transmission of land rights in respect of other types of land tenure in Rotuma do not accord with Rotuman customs and traditions, are discriminatory and arbitrary;
3. The provisions of s 31 denying the lawful rights of legally adopted children are discriminatory, unconstitutional and arbitrary; and
4. A Review Committee was appointed to review the existing Act but the appointment of the members of that Committee and its deliberations have not been publicized,

**AS THESE PROPOSED LAWS have far reaching cultural, social, economic and legal implications to us and our future generations.**

**SO WE HUMBLY PRAY.**

**DATED THIS.....**