

**The moral gutting of Fiji and coming economic collapse: to raise our voice as one
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For two and a half years, we have watched our society unraveling in bits and pieces.

Too close to each incident and emotionally traumatized, we are unable to see the totality of the massive erosion that is taking place in our nation.

Every civilized nation has institutions, glues, threads, moral values, and accepted social processes, that enable all citizens to fully contribute to their family's and country's growth and development.

But what happens when all the glues dissolve, when all the sacred institutions and organizations become morally gutted by the unlawful actions of a few? Sadly, that is Fiji today.

Just as one can climb a mountain with one small step after another, so also can a country descend into a social and economic hell, if its citizens take one wrong step after another, while the others watch in silence.

With the active collaboration of many "good" citizens following their own narrow agendas to "move Fiji forward", Bainimarama continues the destructive moral gutting of Fiji, depriving us of our basic human rights, and leading us into deepening disaster.

Our people's fundamental right to elect a government and leaders has been stolen by the country's soldiers, armed with guns paid for by the tax-payers themselves.

Self-imposed leaders now tax the people, borrow and increase the public debt as they will, and spend tax-payers' money wherever and whenever they want.

They hire and fire civil servants and board members without any heed to signed contracts or natural justice, or future lawsuits that they certainly won't bear.

The highest in the judiciary take illegal oaths and support treason.

The military rank and file are warned they owe allegiance not to the State but personally to the Commander.

The police are told that the way for crime prevention is through Church Crusade antics.

Unelected people, with no accountability, make fundamental decisions on the country's only pension fund, without any reference to the fund owners- the workers of the country.

The Military Government stifles any dissenting voices through ruthless censorship of the media, whose owners either readily capitulate, or collaborate perniciously.

Major religious organizations willingly support the illegal government, blatantly ignoring the rule of law. Many willingly collaborate.

Man-made financial disasters and scams arise again. Social organizations disintegrate.

Once the TV images of the failed African states seemed so far, now they are very near.

Instead of energetically building this country, the majority of our decent citizens watch in totally demoralized silence, this pervasive moral gutting and erosion of the very foundations of our society, deeply worried about the future, with many choosing to emigrate.

Take stock today, and witness how Fiji is morally gutted, from the top down.

A morally eroded President

In 2006, the President of Fiji allowed himself to be removed by the Military Commander, and then reappointed as the President in a Military Government.

While massive electoral fraud and corruption were the excuses for the coup, almost three years later, no convincing evidence of either has been produced.

Then for two years, the Military Government, the NCBBF and its Co-Chairman Archbishop Mataka, John Samy and their collaborators spent tens of millions of dollars and massive amounts of civil servants' time, on national meetings, consultations, the drafting and printing of a glossy Charter. Alleged to be "a Sacred Covenant", the Blueprint for Fiji's recovery, it was eventually approved by the Military President.

The Charter proudly began "*We the People of Fiji, Affirm that our Constitution represents the supreme law of our country, that it provides the framework for the conduct of government and the people*".

But when the highest court in the country- the Court of Appeal- ruled against Bainimarama, the President and the Military Government, the very same Constitution was thrown aside and purportedly abrogated.

There was not a whimper from all the upright citizens who were members of the NCBBF which developed the Charter allegedly with the co-operation and consent of all the people of Fiji: Mataka, Barr, Arms, CCF's Yabaki and Dakuvula, Arya, DC Maharaj, Tevi, Serulagilagi, Tabakucoro, and the hired consultants like John Samy all have remained silent on the Constitution's alleged abrogation.

How ironic that in his abrogation speech, the President asserted that the Charter had been supported by 64% of the people of Fiji but with his next breath he claimed to abrogate the very 1997 Constitution whose supremacy was stated in the Charter's first paragraph.

Did he even understand what he read, or was he blindly following the orders of Bainimarama?

Did the President's advisers tell him that by claiming to abrogate the 1997 Constitution that had been approved by the whole Parliament, all the political parties, and the Great Council of Chiefs, he was committing treason against the Republic of Fiji?

If he did understand what he was reading, then a morally eroded President now treasonously presides over a Military Government which continues to erode and destroy the nation the President is sworn to protect.

It is tragic that the Tui Vuda is being led through this massive charade, by Bainimarama and his legal advisers.

The Morally Eroded Commander

Some of the origins of the 2006 coup may be in the attempted coup and mutiny of 2000, still largely unexplained.

But the seeds of the 2006 coup must be seen in Bainimarama's own attempted abrogation of the Constitution in 2000 (rejected by Justice Gates), the 2000 mutiny by the CRW soldiers who tried to assassinate their own Commander, and the murder of CRW soldiers taken alive from their homes in the military's attempt to get at the truth behind the mutiny. No one has been charged for those deaths in military custody, although Hughes said the police were close to doing so when the 2006 coup took place.

It would seem that Bainimarama planned a coup from 2003, and eventually executed it in 2006. With that 2006 coup, Bainimarama also stalled his own prosecution for the military's \$26 millions of over-expenditure of tax-payers' funds in 2006 and much more in the years before.

Appointing himself Prime Minister and Finance Minister, he misappropriated for the military another \$50 millions of tax-payers funds in 2007, and another \$30 millions in 2008. It is unknown what he is misappropriating in 2009.

Bainimarama gave himself \$180 thousands as back-pay for 30 years of accumulated "leave"- a benefit denied to the lower ranks of soldiers.

Despite all the Charter's grand claims towards greater transparency and accountability of government, Bainimarama, as Minister of Finance, refuses to release the Auditor General's Reports to the public. And no one in the NCBBF is even asking Bainimarama for the Auditor General's reports.

Bainimarama is enjoying his role as Prime Minister, with all the financial benefits, adulation, the status, and the immense power he wields using his guns.

No one knows who Bainimarama's real advisers are, although clearly influential are the Military Attorney General (Aiyaz Khaiyum), the Military Council including Colonel Aziz, a few well-known senior business tycoons and rising stars (they are all named on the blog sites), and foreign consultants like John Samy who still come and go.

Whoever they are, they ruthlessly and callously play Russian Roulette with the lives and future of Fiji's people.

Bainimarama is not accountable to the Military Council or his Military Cabinet or to the people of Fiji. He hires or fires at his whim. He may sell public assets to whoever he wants to. Or do deals on tax-payers' behalf, with international fugitive millionaires.

It seems clear that Bainimarama will drag his Military Government out as long as he can.

He used the excuse of the NCBBF and the Charter for the last two years, a Roadmap this year, work on a "new" Constitution and a simple electoral reform from 2012 (why three years from now? duh!) a new "pocket-size" Constitution by 2014 (why "pocket size"? duh!) and, if anyone wants to believe it, parliamentary elections in 2014.

And who's deciding all this for we Fiji people? Commodore Bainimarama, armed with the guns we gave him to protect us.

Bainimarama seems to care little that by 2014, he will have brought the economy and the people of Fiji to their knees, that he has so deeply divided this country that he has to impose total censorship of the media, to hide the cracks.

Is his Military Council (including advisers like former Military Commander Paul Manueli) going along with this destruction of Fiji? Will they take joint responsibility for the tragedy they are creating?

The morally eroded judiciary

After the military takeover in 2006, a High Court judge (Naz Shameem) did a "coup" on the previous Chief Justice by purporting to appoint Anthony Gates as Acting Chief Justice. Gates, together with Pathik and Byrnes, then purportedly legalized the actions of the President and the military during the 2006 coup, and thereafter.

But when the judgment of the Appeals Court in 2009 made clear that the actions in 2006 by the President and the military were totally illegal, the 1997 Constitution was purportedly abrogated by the President and Bainimarama reappointed as Prime Minister.

High Court Judges Gates, Pathik and Byrnes then rejoined the judiciary under the new military regime, totally ignoring their sacred oaths under the 1997 Constitution.

Gate's decision to become the Chief Justice was not justified on any argument that the Appeals Court judgment was wrong. No. He merely argued that the judiciary had to be kept going. That the people needed a functioning system of laws.

The most senior judges in our judiciary have themselves now taken illegal oaths, the same crime for which they imprisoned a number of persons after the 2000 coups.

These senior judges will now claim to apply the "rule of law" to Fiji's people, but by the Military Decrees, our people will have no legal right to challenge any military actions prior to the decree.

This morally compromised judiciary is now to be the ultimate protector of the human rights of the people of Fiji.

They will probably perform the same function as was performed by the other Shameem who emasculated Fiji's Human Rights Commission, in defending and justifying the 2006 military coup.

So what if investors now have no faith in contracts and simply will not invest, however much FTIB jumps up and down? So what if the economy does not grow and the poverty increases? Oh, that's not the judiciary's problem.

The gutted Great Council of Chiefs

In the 1997 Constitution, the GCC and its nominees to Senate, played many critical roles in being the last safeguard for the welfare of Fijians, especially regarding land.

More than \$30 millions of scarce tax payers' money were spent on housing this so called "august body of Fijian elders".

But the GCC has been closed down by the military, and the chiefs sent home, with not a whimper.

There has been no organized opposition from the Chiefs, high or low. No great statements have been made against the actions of the military. No lines drawn in the sand. No meetings with their people. No meetings amongst themselves.

A few of the chiefs, including two former military commanders, have even joined the military regime, yet again profanely swearing oaths on sacred bibles, oaths they have never kept before.

We still socialize with them, drink grog, play golf, have a laugh, pretending that life goes on as usual, while these prominent chiefs help the country to collapse around us, destroying our poor people's livelihood.

With the increasing emigration of the educated Fijians, the chiefs supporting the military government are also helping Bainimarama to gut the Fijian people of much needed and relevant leadership for the future.

The eroded military and police

After the first coup in 2006, Bainimarama appeared to be merely following the President's lawful directives.

And strengthened by the Gates, Pathik and Byrne judgment, military personnel could have followed their Commander's orders in good faith. Similarly, the police rank and file may have understandably followed the military-appointed Commissioner of Police.

For two years, the Military Government bought off most of the senior officers with improvements in their salaries and conditions.

But following the 2009 judgment of the Fiji Court of Appeal, the insides of most of those in the Military Council, the Fiji Military Forces and the Fiji Police Force, at all levels, must be now in turmoil.

They know that in abrogating the 1997 Constitution, the Military Commander and the Military Council, and all the Ministers appointed by the Military, are now committing treason against the state of Fiji.

They know in their hearts that in following the orders of the Military Government, they are also engaging in treason, as well as a whole range of illegal activities, such as censorship of the media, and detention and intimidation of ordinary civilians without good cause.

What must the ordinary rank and file soldiers and police be thinking, when they are asked to mount full-time guards around the persons and residences of the Commander, the Commissioner of Police, and the Attorney General? What? Our country's guards have been reduced to providing guards for themselves? Never has this happened in the history of Fiji.

Many in the police know that there should be no room for Christian Crusades in a secular professional police force, yet they follow orders, or risk losing their livelihoods.

In following the immoral orders of their Military Commander and Police Commissioner, the professional military and police officers are being morally eroded, on a daily basis.

The innermost morale of the professional soldiers and police officers must be at an all time low. Such erosion of professionalism in the military and police will take decades to correct, if ever, as the experience after the 1987 coups showed.

The soldiers and policemen must also know that any future economic collapse of the economy or the FNPF, must also affect them and their families.

The Eroded Civil Service

Gone are the days when civil servants had the confidence to give proper professional advice, knowing that they had the protection of their association, and ultimately the protection of the judiciary against unlawful treatment by their employer.

Since December 2006, senior civil servants have been fired willy nilly, with not a thought to natural justice.

Worse still, senior civil servants have been hired out of the blue for key positions, with no proven track record, or without going through the proper channels.

For instance, a NZ citizen (John Prasad) is appointed as the Permanent Secretary of Finance, against the protests of all the professional senior civil servants in that Ministry.

He has no relevant qualifications for the position. He is known to be related by marriage to the Military Attorney General. But he has now been given powers for all manner of commercial dealings using Fiji tax-payer's funds, accountable to no one except the Military Commander.

Does he have conflicts of interest through companies which do consultancies with the Fiji Government?

On what basis would such a person then be appointed to be the Chairman of the Fiji National Provident Fund, where he will now have ultimate responsibility for all decisions regarding our pension savings.

He may lend our money to risky projects that the military wants to support- like Fijian Holdings Limited's potentially disastrous \$190 million bid for BP South Pacific. He can sell off FNPF assets, with no accountability to FNPF stakeholders. He may reduce pensions to all and sundry.

John Prasad will also be ultimately responsible for board decisions to lend more of FNPF money to the Military Fiji Government to cover its irresponsible deficits and expenditure. As Secretary of Finance, he will simultaneously also have joint responsibility for deciding how much to borrow from FNPF on tax-payers' behalf.

How ridiculous? It is as if the Military Government used its guns to make the largest borrower from Westpac, the Chairman of the Board of Westpac.

Has John Prasad's appointment been approved by the Chairman of the Public Service Commission, Jo Serulagilagi? Does the current Chairman of the PSC take responsibility for whatever happens as a result of John Prasad's decisions?

The eroded business community

The business community, as always, do not give a jot for what happens to the country or its ordinary people. They have never had any morals to be eroded.

They give every support to the Military Government, publicly and privately, in return for the expected favors.

Largely because of the support of such immoral businessmen, Bainimarama and his Ministers have been able to maintain the great pretense that they are successfully running a “Government”.

These immoral businessmen and business tycoons have no qualms in ignoring that the economy is in dire straits; that poverty and unemployment are far worse than in 2006; that crucial national institutions such as the Fiji National Provident Fund, are in the process of being gutted by this Military Government and their cronies.

As long as these tycoons (and all of Fiji know who they are) can make even bigger fortunes which will end up outside Fiji.

Too late, a few will find that those who could not abide by the law when it comes to an elected government, will not abide by the law of contracts signed and sealed: note the FICAC raids on RB Patel offices.

Our eroded political leaders

The military emasculation of the SDL/FLP Multi-Party Government, and more particularly, the SDL leadership is all too obvious.

When the 2006 coup took place, all the SDL and FLP Ministers, except for Qarase and Kinivuwai, disappeared over the horizon.

The Fijian political intelligentsia retreated into their “culture of silence” or “culture of acquiescence”, joining the winning military “band-wagon”. Some retaliated by secretly blogging away.

The Fiji Labour Party leaders readily joined the Military Government, throwing aside decades of moral and lawful opposition to military coups and undemocratic governments. So also did the National Alliance Party.

With serious questions being raised about millions of dollars given by India for dispossessed Fiji cane farmers ending up in Chudhry’s Australian accounts, what kind of leadership can the FLP provide to the Indo-Fijians.

Intellectually weakened by the massive emigration of professional and skilled persons, the Indo-Fijian political and social elite who remain, blindly “follow the leader” or are totally indifferent.

Witness the abject silence and disinterest of the majority of young educated Indo-Fijians in national events, immersed as they are in Bollywood, and pre-occupation to emigrate from Fiji.

The irony is that when these apathetic Indo-Fijians emigrate, they will have lost 20 percent of all their life savings in Fiji, because of the 20% devaluation, with more losses to come in the future.

Our eroded religious organizations

The Military Government has muzzled the Methodist Church and denied them their freedom of assembly and speech. But there has not been a cheep of protest from the sister Catholic or other Christian Churches or Hindu organisations.

But then, seduced by Bainimarama’s rhetoric of racial equality in Fiji, these same latter organisations had all joined the NCBBF ride to create the Charter, whose foundation was stated to be the supremacy of the 1997 Constitution.

But there were no strong protests from Mataca (Co-Chair of the NCBBF) or the other religious organisations and their followers (Arya Samaj and Sanatan Dharam), or the CCF (Yabaki and Dakuvula) when the 1997 Constitution was abrogated and tossed aside by the Military Government, and their sister organization prosecuted for their political views.

Indeed, one head of a Hindu organization has made a lot of money out of the printing of all the NCBBF and Charter documents- none of which acknowledge the printer.

No religious organization is protesting that the Commissioner of Police is thrusting his sectional Christian Crusade down the throats of all police personnel, and telling dissenters that they can resign if they don’t like it.

ECREA’s Kevin Barr, happy with his marginal Wages Council gains and a million tax-payers’ dollars for squatter housing, is happy to ignore the massively bigger destruction of the economy and people’s livelihoods, the increases in poverty, the increasing inability of tax-payers to look after health and education needs of the needy..

David Arms, happy that a minor electoral reform may be implemented in the future, does not care that the alleged need for minor electoral reform has been used to justify the treasonous over-throw of a lawfully elected government and the 1997 Constitution. He is also now silent.

The Citizens Constitutional Forum, awash with EU money, can now of course help the Military Government on Fiji's forthcoming new constitution!

Our religious organizations and clerics are so morally eroded that they cannot make a principled stand any more on the treasonous abrogation of the Constitution, because they threw in their lot with Bainimarama two and a half years ago, believing his rhetoric of equality of races, religions and cultures.

Even Bainimarama, whose Charter keeps harping about the equality of all religions, is totally quiet on the Police Crusades.

The morally eroded former and current citizens

We would not be where we are today, had it not been for the many former citizens, especially elite Indo-Fijians, who supported this 2006 coup, many because of some racism against them in the past: a leading economist driven out by the 1987 coup; a High Court judge who did not receive government support for an international position; a high flying CEO who did not get Government support for a Brussels position; an economist bureaucrat who was bypassed for the position of the Governor of the Reserve Bank; senior managers in the sugar industry; rejected good applicants for Government and statutory organization positions; media personalities who thought they deserved better; and many more.

Without any moral qualms, many have accepted appointments at the expense of other Fiji citizens who were arbitrarily removed without a hint of natural justice.

However one may sympathize with their unfair treatment in the past, two wrongs will not make a right.

Then of course, there are many former citizens who just appeared out of the wood-work, using their friendships with those in the Military Government, to get into astonishing positions of power and authority, earning themselves massive financial benefits.

These morally eroded former citizens are quite comfortable lapping their milk and honey, and basking in the recently acquired power and glory in Fiji, caring little about the future of ordinary Indo-Fijians who will remain in this country for the foreseeable future.

Of course, these opportunist former citizens, while claiming eternal love for their country of birth, will eventually disappear back to the security of their newly adopted countries, where they and their families can happily enjoy civilized lives, under a rule of law which they have helped to destroy in Fiji.

Some may have been genuine at wanting to help, like Robin Nair, who realised all too late that he was just being used. He left quietly when he realized there was no "President's Mandate", just instructions from a military dictator.

And then there are the many good citizens who have stepped up to help the illegal Military Government: Rishi Ram, Winston Thompson, Isoa Gavidi, Jo Serulagilagi... . the list is long, and still growing.

They all bear joint responsibility for this illegal edifice that has been created after 2006, and the economic disaster that is being visited on us.

Will these good citizens ever stand up to right the wrong they have done the country? Or will they, like Pontius Pilate, simply wash their hands off the matter and disappear from public eye as many have done and others are doing now?

The eroded Fiji Law Society

Of all the professions in the country, the legal profession may be expected to give the ordinary people the greatest guidance during legally confusing times such as these.

But bar a few, the majority of lawyers have failed Fiji miserably. They have failed to enlighten the country on any of the major issues. They have failed to defend the Constitution as their oaths obliged them to.

One of the key objectives of any “Law Society” is the provision of guidance to members on issues that affect them all collectively. What could be of greater collective interest than their own registration.

But the Fiji Law Society decided to let members decide for themselves, with the inevitable result.

A principled few (two?) may refuse to take oaths under the illegal regime. But most will willingly serve under an illegal Military Regime’s rules, even if clearly illegal: clients need to be served; the legal system has to keep going; and of course, bread and butter has to be earned.

And no doubt, a select few are able to enjoy not just bread and butter, but also a lot of sweet jam, from their closeness to the Military Government.

The eroded accountants and auditors

The accountants and auditors recently had their annual Accountants Congress.

As they have done since 1987, they ask non-accountants (usually naive economists, lawyers, and even historians) to make bold speeches that will shake up Fiji, re-engineer Fiji, raise troublesome issues, and challenge governments of the day.

The accountants and auditors themselves have never ever “rocked the boat”. They are too busy making money from government contracts and making sure that they stay appointed on the important boards in the country.

They even choose to ignore vital issues of the day, which ought to be central to the accounting and auditing world: the 2009 Accountants Congress did not ask why this unelected Military Government is not releasing the Auditor General's Reports for 2006, 2007 and 2008.

Reports which would no doubt outline how \$150 millions of tax-payers' money has been over-spent by the Military? And how tens of millions of tax-payers' dollars have been wasted on the Charter Charade, the NCBBF, Police Crusades, etc?

The Accountants Congress did not really mind that their invited guest speakers were removed from their Congress program. Indeed, their Chairman even thanked the Military Government for allowing their Congress and AGM to proceed. How nice for all.

The eroded media

Worse than after any previous coup, we now see total censorship of the country's media, taking away our rights to freedom of expression and free speech.

Anything which raises questions about what is happening, does not make it to the public eye or ear.

Critical opinion articles are censored from newspapers. TV interviews are either heavily censored or just cut altogether. One cannot even ask questions on the Fiji Broadcasting Corporation airwaves about our own pension funds, and why totally unaccountable and inappropriate persons are being appointed on the FNPF board by this Military Government.

This Military Government has been able to decide who will not be allowed to speak to a Pacific gathering of youths, partially funded by Fiji's tax-payers (including the banned speakers).

We Fiji people quietly accept that this unelected Military Government armed with guns will decide what we can see on television, read in papers or hear through radio.

The Military Government has virtually stopped Fiji's people from knowing what is going on in their lives and to their own welfare.

And the media has capitulated, of course protecting jobs and livelihoods, but also protecting their large corporate profits.

Our eroded social and sports organizations

Our moral gutting is not confined to the formal institutions of state but extends to all our major sports and social organizations.

The Fiji Sports Council has gone through several revolutions with hints of scandal, mismanagement and power politics.

The Fiji Football Association hierarchy has kept its iron grip on the sport, preventing by fair means or foul, any challenge to the leadership which might have taken away huge financial benefits from the incumbents, while the sport stumbles along.

Year after year, the Fiji Rugby Union and the Fiji Netball Association have gone through paroxysms of organizational and professional conflicts, with massive public acrimony.

The boxing organizations have split, fallen apart and regrouped in competing camps.

All manner of social clubs, all over the country, keep getting their funds embezzled by office bearers, some are taken over by the trustees, some eventually closed down in prime city locations.

Everywhere, schools' management committees have fights with school principals- the discretionary control of school funds usually at the heart of it.

Credit union and co-operative funds have a long history of being abused, while Fijian co-operative efforts like CBM collected massive amounts of funds from ordinary villagers, eventually disappearing from sight with nothing to show. Somewhere along the way, a Banaban Trust Fund was also gutted, without inquiry.

Fiji is totally morally gutted and the massive financial disasters are the glaring symptoms.

Our major financial disasters

Rabuka's 1987 military coup and military appointments led to the collapse of our National Bank of Fiji, with hundreds of millions of dollars eventually lost by tax-payers. A public inquiry was called for, but Makrava then said, "If I go, all the high and mighty in Fiji will go with me". There was no public inquiry.

In the nineties, a Commodity Development Fund Scam involving tens of millions of dollars surfaced, and disappeared, with no public inquiry. In this decade, the Agricultural Scam came and went, also with no public inquiry, while a few small fry were convicted.

And today, a huge financial disaster is about to be imposed by this Military Government on our Fiji National Provident Fund, the effects of which may well financially gut the savings of the current and future working generations, and take this entire country into economic collapse.

For no good cause, the military government has removed employees' (and employers' representatives) on the Fiji National Provident Fund. Those removed were not antagonistic to the Military Government- some were quite sympathetic but are unable to

even speak to Bainimarama. The censorship ensures that their views are not known to the public.

This unelected Military Government is now appointing even more dubious representatives to the FNPF Board, who presumably will be amenable to the Military Government's demands on where to lend, who to lend to, and how much.

FNPF is in the process of being financially gutted by a Military Government, accountable to no one.

This Military Government's censorship is making sure that the FNPF shareholders (including even their soldiers and policemen) cannot hear about it, or talk about it, until it will be all too late.

Our impending economic collapse

What does the future hold for us?

Just as one can climb a mountain with one small step after another, so also can a country descend into a social and economic hell, if a few citizens take one wrong step after another, while we others watch in silence.

Fiji seems destined to slowly disintegrate over the next five years, as we are doing now.

Bainimarama and his Ministers, will continue their grand parading and charade of good governance for as long as they can, surrounding themselves with and being reassured by "yes-men" and sycophants.

Civil servants will continue to support the Military Government initiatives, or lose their jobs, while some will gladly collaborate for the promotions they will get.

Empty speeches will continue to be made about tourism looking up, new investments here and there, inflation figures, or GDP figures, etc. etc.

The Military-appointed Reserve Bank Governor, now safely a NZ Permanent Resident, will make supporting noises here and there.

There will be a few cases of corruption exposed, involving a few millions.

But this Military Government, its Ministers, and coup supporters, will continue to ignore the harsh economic reality that the ordinary people of this country have already lost more than a billion dollars because of their 2006 military coup.

They choose to ignore that our pension fund may lose hundreds of millions more in bad loans.

Millions of tax-payers money will be spent on white elephants like new Police Headquarters which will not make an iota of difference to crime prevention.

Without adequate investment there will be little economic growth, our foreign reserves will keep falling, and more devaluations will occur.

There will be continuing inflation, sending everyone's savings, in FNPF and elsewhere, down the drain- including those of all the soldiers and policemen who are blindly following the orders of their Commander and Police Commissioner.

The incomes of our poorest people will not rise to compensate for the increases in the cost of living. It will be increasingly difficult, if not impossible to construct a moral society, on empty stomachs.

There will be a worsening of poverty, crimes, violence against women and children, and prostitution.

Our educated, both Indo-Fijians and increasingly the educated indigenous Fijians, will continue to emigrate.

Our people will continue to claim to hear nothing, see nothing, and say nothing. Until it is too late.

Then, their eyes will not be able to avoid seeing, and they will weep tears; while their ears will hear hungry and angry mouths wailing.

Is it really too late?

It is not too late

What will we tell our children when they ask us: "Dad, Mum, what did you say or do, when you saw that our future was being destroyed". You did nothing? You said nothing?

But this beautiful country of ours, with it gorgeous kaleidoscope and rainbow of peoples, religions, and cultures, deserves better; our poor deserve better; our children deserve better.

Whatever our past differences, the social and political leaders of Fiji must get together and convince Bainimarama and the Military Council to return to the lawful constitutional path, to prevent this impending disaster, and to enable all citizens to join in contributing to national recovery and development.

As was said by a forlorn diamond, whose musical rays and twinkling toes bewitched his generation, despite his very human flaws:

"There is nothing that can't be done, if we raise our voice as one".