



# FIJI HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

GPO Private Mail Bag  
SUVA, FIJI ISLANDS

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## **Press statement: Freedom of Expression - Blogs**

The Fiji Human Rights Commission today stated that people engaging in ‘hate speech’ on blogspots cannot be protected by the freedom of expression provisions of section 30 of the Constitution.

The Commission says that freedom of expression and speech is protected by the Constitution but this freedom does not include freedom to express ‘hate speech’ or damage the reputation, dignity, privacy, or rights and freedoms of other individuals.

The Commission has observed that ‘hate speech’ is increasingly, and disturbingly, being expressed in the blogs. Such hate speeches are unlawful and people who express them can be prosecuted under the Penal Code. The Commission will not tolerate any ‘hate speech’ and advises that those expressing such speeches under the current cloak of anonymity on blogs should face the full brunt of the law if they are identified.

The Commission also states that only about 10% of the blogs messages contain accurate information for the public; the rest is a combination of gossip and ‘**insinuendo**’, which is a new word coined to describe the combination of ‘insinuation’ and ‘innuendo’.

Commenting on reports that certain individuals were being questioned in relation to comments on various blogspots, the Commission said it had advised senior military and police personnel, as well as the Attorney General, about the constitutional and human rights guidelines to be followed when investigating blog messages and those suspected of creating them.

The Commission has also observed the violation of the right to privacy on these blogspots, with personal addresses and telephone numbers of individuals who have been targeted being disseminated publicly, giving rise to concerns about personal and family security of these individuals.