

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Legal farce in Fijian Copyright laws

September 7, 2011, Suva, Fiji Islands

The Fiji Audio Visual Industry Association (FAVIA) along with the general public is *disturbed* that the recent court rulings on August 8th, and 19th 2011 involving Copyright Movie Infringement cases (State v Yogesh Lal and Dharmend Rama respectively), *acquitted* both parties despite sufficient evidence and a guilty plea. This sets a *serious precedent whereby any guilty party can expect an acquittal* in Fiji's courts. Furthermore, it also reinforces the message that breaking the law has no consequences in Fiji, that it is encouraged to steal in this country.

The new legislation after being introduced in 2009 has to date only 10 cases processed after investigations taking 12 months in duration, despite more than 50 raids.

Despite reassurances from the Attorney General stating that the law is sufficient to tackle the worsening piracy situation, that has seen an increase from 3 million illegal imports in 2005 to 22 million in 2010, the recent legal rulings prove it to be totally inadequate and will cause further unemployment and heavy loss of investment, and confidence with law abiding investors.

We call on the Prime Minister to direct those public servants responsible to root out this decades-long issue, including FICAC, FIRCA, Police and DPP.

Our local artists, and through related industries and the public at large cannot afford to lose serious tax revenue and consumer service standards.

There is only one remaining legal video outlet in this country. FAVIA members pay Government high taxes, who in turn subsidise the illegal operators with extremely unfair tax regimes.

How long will authorities wait for before they make a real commitment effort to carry out their responsibility to carry out their legal mandate to serve and protect those who follow the law?

FAVIA looks forward in assisting the industry, FIRCA, Police and DPP.

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For more information, please log onto: www.ifiji.com/favia/

ABOUT FAVIA

The Fiji Audio Visual Industry Association was set up in July 2006 to promote the protection of intellectual property and raise awareness on copyright issues in Fiji. Association members include Fiji Television, SPR, IMHD, Damodar Brothers, TFL, Eros Pacific. Office bearers are: President – Chris Caine; Secretary – Krupesh Patel; and Treasurer – Div Damodar.