



## **PRESS SECRETARIAT**

**MINISTRY OF THE PRIME MINISTER & CABINET**

**Apia, Samoa**

Telephone : (685) 63222 ext 746, 747, 748, (685) 24799, (685) 26397

Fax : (685) 26322 Email: [pressecretariat@samoa.ws](mailto:pressecretariat@samoa.ws)

### **Media Release**

The Prime Minister, Hon. Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi, responding to media reports and enquiries that Fiji's Interim Prime Minister has accused Samoa of being too much under the influence of New Zealand in not attending the Engaging Fiji meeting said:

“The accusation is yet another of the interim military regime’s menu of disinformation techniques designed to deflect attention from the situation the regime is putting Fiji and its people through. Frankly, it really does not deserve a response. But in the case the Interim Prime Minister does not know or has chosen to ignore, Samoa became independent from New Zealand in 1962. Samoans had never been comfortable with outside influence or rule as evidenced by the agitation of our people to govern our own affairs as far back as the time of German colonial rule more than 100 years ago, and continued to the time of the New Zealand administration.

Samoa is not under the influence of any country. What Samoa has done instead is to continue to respect our matai system and culture, and weave into these the so called ‘outside’ influences and institutions of Christianity and democratic processes that promote harmony and provide voice to our people to decide the governance and destiny of Samoa.

Samoa is no more under the influence of New Zealand than any other key partners of Samoa and these partners have different approaches in dealing with the military government of Bainimarama.

Samoa’s approach is predicated on our firm belief that we do not think that Bainimarama’s illegal military governance of Fiji and the suppression of the rights of the Fijian people is correct. It is not good for Fiji or for the Pacific region. And as the region is well aware, our view on the situation in Fiji has been consistent from day one.

It is not, as any sensible person would quickly understand, because of too much influence by New Zealand or any other country over Samoa as charged by the interim regime.

It is in a way similar to my non-acceptance of the accusation that Samoa did not attend the ‘Engaging Fiji’ meeting because of too much influence by New Zealand over Samoa. I would imagine that countries participating would reject any notion that they attended

because the Fiji interim military government somehow exerts too much influence over them.”

The Prime Minister felt that Bainimarama’s invitation was awkward for the Pacific leadership but as often happens; Pacific politeness and cultural associations take precedence even when there are fundamental differences in viewpoints.

Office of the Prime Minister  
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