



PRESS RELEASE

9th AUGUST, 2007

FIRCA notes with concern the media smear campaign launched by the Daily Post against a so-called senior Minister in the Interim Government. FIRCA believes that this campaign, which is without any substance, is orchestrated by officers who are under investigation for defrauding the state of tax revenue.

FIRCA has suspended three staff and sent one senior official on leave to allow necessary investigations to be carried out under the FIRCA Code of Conduct.

This step was taken in response to the involvement of a number of staff in a VAT refund scam and for manipulating their own tax position. There is evidence that number of officers have colluded with companies to approve fraudulent VAT refunds and a reduction of their tax liability.

FIRCA wishes to clarify and assure the public that it has not released information on any taxpayer as it is bound by the Secrecy Provisions under the tax legislation. FIRCA categorically denies that tax files and information have been released to any minister in the interim government as alleged on the Daily Post of August 9. It is irresponsible and malicious for the newspaper to make such wild allegations.

However, FIRCA will welcome any specific complaints of substance regarding any taxpayer who is involved in tax evasion. FIRCA assures that proper investigations will be carried out and appropriate action taken if it is substantiated by evidence.

FIRCA must deal firmly with officers who collude with taxpayers to defraud the State of tax revenue. This is absolutely necessary to safeguard the effectiveness and integrity of our tax system.

FILIFE BOLE
CHAIRMAN
FIJI ISLAND REVENUE AND CUSTOMS AUTHORITY