



GOVERNMENT TENDER BOARD

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28 June 2022

Mr Mohammed Saneem
Supervisor of Elections
Fiji Elections Office
SUVA

Dear Mr Saneem

Re: Request to Provide Information

I refer to your letter dated 24 June 2022 where you had requested a formal response to the Fiji Elections Office pertaining to the comments made by Mr Haroon Ali Shah of the Fiji Labor Party on Wednesday 18 May 2022 at a campaign rally at Qalitu Primary School, Lautoka.

According to your letter, Mr Haroon Shah had made the following allegations:

- a) "We don't know where millions of dollars have gone and you don't know how contracts are given to big companies".
- b) "There is no public tender and it has become a private matter".
- c) "It's who you know and all you have to do is call them and how much will they get – its straight forward as that".
- d) "It will not be given in your account but someone with a fake account and no tax is to be paid".
- e) "This is what we have been saying. We are not doing this to gain praise but we are just stating facts".

[1] Allegations

The allegations focuses in three aspects of tender i.e. tender advertisements, tender evaluation & awards and the validity of awarded companies. It is important to note that no evidences were provided to corroborate the claim. Rather, the claims seemed to be based on assumptions and hearsay.

[2] Procurement approval authorities

Government of Fiji's procurement process is guided by the Procurement Regulations 2010 (Regulations) and procurement policies and guidelines. The regulations can be accessed through www.laws.gov.fj. Guidelines and policies can be accessed in Fiji Procurement office's website www.fpo.gov.fj.

The Government Tender Board ("GTB") approves all procurement above \$50,001 while Permanent Secretaries approve procurement below \$50,000. The response below relates to procurement above \$50,000 that needs to be tendered i.e. procurement approved by GTB.

[3] Tender advertisement and updates

The claim that ‘there is no public tender’ is false. All tenders are published through the newspaper twice and Government of Fiji’s eTender portal. (<https://portal.tenderlink.com/economyfiji/>). The eTender portal is managed by illion Tenderlink, a company that manages tenders for 600+ organizations and publish more than 41,000 tenders per annum. Tenderlink system is used by various Government Ministries, Departments government statutory authorities and companies in Fiji, Australia and New Zealand.

Once the tenders are closed, the public can track the status of each tender in the Fiji Procurement Office website.

[4] Tender evaluation and awards

Contrary to claims that awards decisions are based on “who you know”, tenders are evaluated by an evaluation committee consisting of representatives from

- the procuring Ministry,
- a Ministry that provides technical advice,
- Fiji Procurement Office; and
- Ministry of Commerce, Trade, Transport and Tourism

Evaluations follow a specific evaluation methodology that can be accessed through the Fiji Procurement Office’s website. In addition, the tender evaluation criteria forms part of tender documents available to bidders through the eTender portal.

The submissions are sent to Government Tender Board’s approval once the committee reaches consensus. Once approved, all bidders are informed via email on the outcome immediately. This is managed through the eTender portal.

Details on awarded tenders are available publically and can be viewed on our eTender portal. Any interested stakeholder can view the award details as long as they register themselves in the portal.

[5] Business verification

The claim that “someone with a fake accounts and no tax to be paid” is ludicrous. Working with valid companies that pay taxes is an important component in tender evaluation. Bidders who participate in tenders must provide compliance letters from FNPF and FRCS and prove that they are a registered business. In the absence of such confirmations, a bidder is eliminated from evaluation.

In addition and as part of its due diligence, Fiji Procurement Office runs separate verifications directly with FNPF, FRCS and Registrar of Companies on bidders recommended by evaluation committees. This is to ensure the awarded companies are not using fake accounts or confirm that their compliance documents were not tampered with. Where verification is required for overseas companies, Fiji Procurement Office can also run business verifications and risk reports on through illion Tenderlink.

[6] External reviews on government procurement process

Government procurement is subject to a number of a number of external reviews. In addition to the annual audit and performance reviews, government's procurement process are also subject to external donor reviews such as the Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) program review. This was initiated in 2001 by seven international development partners: The European Commission, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and the governments of France, Norway, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. In the last PEFA 2020 review, procurement procedures were assessed as effective.

If you need further information, please do not hesitate to contact me directly or alternatively visit the Fiji Procurement Office's website which has extensive information on government procurement processes.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely



Ariff Ali
Chairman