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## 'Get your facts right'

11/23/2009

Attorney-General and Minister for Communications, Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum, said, "It is unfortunate for Australia and New Zealand and their media to be making false allegations and misleading comments about the Decree in place in Fiji."

That was his reaction to a statement made by the Australian Foreign Affairs Minister, Stephen Smith, concerning the Spectrum Decree.

Mr Smith said the Government had revoked broadcasting arrangements, effectively seizing all licenses.

He said the action had been carried out by decree, which no court or other agency could overturn.

He went on to say that the move was an escalation of the Fiji Government's effort in imposing itself on its critics.

Mr Smith threatened that he would raise the issue with his counterparts at the Commonwealth Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Trinidad and Tobago, beginning tomorrow.

However, Mr Sayed-Khaiyum said if Mr Smith took the trouble to read the Decree, he would find that it was for spectrum planning.

"Fiji is the country that needs to correct the haphazard in the manner which spectrum allocation as modern economy has done.

"The spectrum allocation in planning is implemented to position our country for the digital age," said Mr Sayed-Khaiyum.

He said there was nothing sinister about spectrum planning and the two government need to get their facts right.

He said the Fiji Government had put in place a decree to deal with spectrum planning which would allow Fiji to position itself with digital evolution.

New Zealand also slammed the Decree saying it revoked broadcasting licenses in the Pacific.

Mr Sayed-Khaiyum said while licensees and users of spectrum could continue using the spectrum they had been using, such use was made subject to a determination by the Minister which may or may not mean the reallocation (loss, change of band etc.) of spectrum.

"All licensees and unlicensed users are required to disclose to the Minister the extent of their use of spectrum by a date to be appointed by the Minister," he said.

"This disclosure will in turn allow the Minister and the Department of Communications to carry out the exercise of spectrum allocation and reallocation."

The Attorney-General said that the spectrum stock-take and implementation of the Decree was necessary to allow further investment and competition on a level platform.

He added that band planning and the allocation of any new spectrum through a tender process would complement Government's objective of transparency and accountability and minimise corruption.

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