



ODPP MEDIA UPDATE

ACJ convicts former PM and suspended COMPOL

The Acting Chief Justice Salesi Temo overturned the Magistrate Court's judgment and convicted the former Prime Minister and the suspended COMPOL this morning (14.03.24) at the Suva High Court.

The former PM, Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama was charged with one count of attempted to pervert the course of justice and the suspended COMPOL, Sitiveni Qiliho was charged with one count of abuse of office.

The former PM and the suspended COMPOL were found not guilty and acquitted accordingly by Resident Magistrate Seini Paumau at Suva Magistrates Court on 12 October 2023.

The State had filed eight grounds of appeal which mainly centred on the opinion that the Magistrate erred in law and in fact on several evidentiary and procedural issues, thereby resulting in an unfair trial and an erroneous verdict.

In his judgment, Justice Salesi Temo found that the Magistrate had erred in fact and in law when she found both the respondents not guilty and therefore overturned the Magistrate's decision. Justice Temo found both the respondents guilty as charged.

Justice Temo ordered that this matter be brought before Magistrate Puamau on 18 March 2024 at the Suva Magistrate Court for her to abide by the decision of the High Court and pronounce both the respondents guilty as charged and convict them accordingly.

Justice Temo ordered both the respondents and the State to file their mitigation and sentencing submissions by 20 March 2024 after which the Magistrate is ordered to conduct a sentence hearing on 21 March 2024 followed by the sentencing of the two respondents on 28 March 2024.

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