



ODPP MEDIA UPDATE

High Court sentence man for harmful online content

A man who admitted to posting harmful and offensive content on social media has been convicted and sentenced by the Suva High Court this morning (17.03.26).

Lui Bale Vuiberata pleaded guilty to one count of causing harm by posting electronic communication, contrary to section 24 of the Online Safety Act 2018.

On 14 September 2025, the accused went live on his TikTok account and directed vulgar, degrading and sexually explicit insults towards the Minister for Information, Ms Lynda Tabuya. The video was subsequently shared on the Facebook group "Chat (Fiji)", significantly increasing the reach and visibility of the offensive content.

In her victim impact statement, Ms Tabuya described the emotional distress and embarrassment caused by the incident. She stated that as a woman, mother and public servant, the abuse was extremely painful, humiliating and damaging to her character and reputation. She also stated that her family had also suffered while witnessing the effects of the attack.

The offence carries a maximum penalty of a fine not exceeding \$20,000 or imprisonment for up to five years, or both.

In delivering the sentence, Justice Daniel Goundar noted that the language used by the accused was extreme, that the circulation of the content was wide, and that the impact on the complainant was significant.

The Court also highlighted that there is currently no established sentencing tariff in Fiji for this offence, but took guidance from New Zealand jurisprudence under the Harmful Digital Communications Act.

The accused was sentenced to **eight months' imprisonment, suspended for two years**. In addition, he was ordered to **pay a fine of \$1,000 within one month**. In default of payment, he will serve **three months' imprisonment**.

The Court highlighted that this conviction and sentence reflect the Court's firm view that online platforms are not a license to abuse, degrade, or humiliate others, and that words broadcast to a large audience carry real consequences.

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