

FIJI

Polity5 regime codes:

fac	scode	polity	pers	bmon	bday	byear	emon	eday	eyear	exec	exconst	polcomp
0a	FJI	6	17	10	10	1970	5	5	1987	7	7	4
1X	FJI	-88	1	5	15	1987	12	4	1987	-88	-88	-88
1Xa	FJI	-1	3	12	5	1987	7	24	1990	4	3	6
1Xb	FJI	5	8	7	25	1990	7	26	1998	7	6	6
1O	FJI	6	1	7	27	1998	5	16	1999	7	6	8
1Oa	FJI	8	1	5	17	1999	7	27	2000	8	7	8
2X	FJI	-88	1	7	28	2000	9	30	2001	-88	-88	-88
2Xa	FJI	5	1	10	1	2001	11	23	2004	7	6	6
2O	FJI	6	2	11	24	2004	12	4	2006	7	6	8
2Oa	FJI	-3	0	12	5	2006	4	11	2007	4	3	3
2Ob	FJI	-4	7	4	12	2007	9	21	2014	4	2	3
2Oc	FJI	2	4	9	22	2014	11	14	2018	5	4	8
2Od	FJI	4	0	11	15	2018	99	99	9999	5	5	9

PITF Problem Events:

- 1) 05/87-05/87 (ARC 05/87)
- 2) 12/06-12/06 (ARC 12/06)

0a) October 10, 1970 (independence) – Fiji became an independent parliamentary republic on October 10, 1970, with most (communal) land ownership and political power vested in the ethnic-Melanesian minority (c 46%) and, at least nominally, exercised by the ruling (multi-ethnic) Alliance Party (AP) and led by Prime Minister Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara. The ethnic-Indian population (c 50%) which had come to the island mainly as indentured servants during the period of British colonial rule, but who had come to control much of the island’s economic activity, were split in their support for the multi-ethnic Alliance Party and the ethnic-Indian National Federation Party (NFP). Representation was based on ethnicity with 22 legislative seats reserved for ethnic-Melanesians, 22 seats for ethnic-Indians, and 8 seats for “others” (mainly Europeans). The country’s first parliamentary elections were held in April 1972 with the Alliance party winning 33 seats and the National Federation Party winning 19 seats. The traditional Great Council of Chiefs represented the indigenous, communal population and, although it had a very limited role in government (selecting some members of the Senate), it retained effective authority over the ethnic-Melanesian population. A nationalist faction split from the AP in 1974 and caused the AP to lose its majority in April 1977 elections. New elections were held in September 1977 in which the AP regained a majority due to a split in the NFP. May 1982 elections saw a reunification of the NFP factions and were characterized as “a bitter campaign dominated by racial issues and marred by smear tactics.” The opposition boycotted parliament from December 1983 to April 1984. A new, largely ethnic-Indian, Fijian Labour Party was established in July 1985. In the next general election, held on April 12, 1987, an opposition alliance under Dr. Timoci Bavadra defeated the Alliance Party and was asked to form a government.

1X) Date of Change to Factional-Autocratic: May 15, 1987 (military coup – transitional government)

**Brief Explanation of Change To:
Adverse Regime Change: May 1987**

On May 14, Lt-Col. Sitiveni Rabuka led a coup by the armed forces and deposed the government of Prime Minister Bavadra with the stated intent of reworking the constitution and reinstating the government to ensure primacy for the ethnic-Melanesian population. Whereas the formation of a government led by an alliance of ethnic-Indian parties had triggered a backlash among Melanesian nationalists, Rabuka's coup triggered widespread strikes and demonstrations among the ethnic-Indian community. In an attempt to quell the increasing turmoil, the military consulted with the Great Council of Chiefs and, as a result, a (predominantly ethnic-Melanesian) 19-member, civilian Advisory Council was established as a de facto government on May 25. The Advisory Council was ineffective in restoring social order, however, and, in a second coup on September 25, 1987, Rabuka dissolved the Council and replaced it with a military council.

Identify Main Factions:

- *Fijian Political Party (FPP)* — The FPP was founded in 1990 as the political vehicle of the Great Council of Chiefs, with the declared goal of uniting all indigenous Fijians. Maj-Gen. Sitiveni Rabuka, who had led the 1987 coups, joined the party, along with his supporters, and he soon gained its leadership. Internal strife weakened the party in the late 1990s. The more conservative *Fijian Nationalist United Front* aligned with the FPP.
- *National Federation Party (NFP)* — Although it claimed to represent all Fiji Islanders, the NFP was supported largely by ethnic-Indians. The *Fijian Labour Party (FLP)* was established in 1985 and was based in the trade unions. The FLP was officially multi-racial and fielded candidates for ethnic-Melanesian seats in 1992 elections; however, most of its support came from the Indo-Fijian community.

Changes within Factional Period:

1Xa) December 5, 1987 (new government) – Rabuka's military government established a civilian administration to govern the country on December 5, 1987, when it selected the former Governor-General Ratu Sir Penaia Ganilau as president. President Ganilau, then, appointed Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara as Prime Minister and asked him to form a government. Rabuka was named as Home Minister. Ethnic-Indian participation in the government was severely restricted.

1Xb) July 25, 1990 (new constitution) – President Ganilau promulgated a new constitution on July 25, 1990, replacing the 1970 constitution. This new constitution ensured that political power remained in the hands of the Fiji's ethnic-Melanesian population by reserving 37 seats in the legislature for ethnic-Melanesians and 27 seats for ethnic-Indians; five seats were reserved for other groups. The constitution also maintained traditional Melanesian land ownership structures. Executive power was shared by a president appointed by the Great Council of Chiefs and a prime minister representing the largest party in parliament.

1O) Date of Change from Factional-Democratic: July 27, 1998 (constitutional amendments)

Brief Explanation of Change From:

Following a constitutional review in September 1996, the Constitutional Amendment Bill was adopted on July 25, 1997, and came into effect on July 27, 1998. It provided for opening 25 of the 71 seats in an expanded House of Representative to all groups. The remaining 46 seats would

be reserved for particular ethnic groups, distributed as follows: ethnic-Melanesians 23, ethnic-Indians 19, others 3, and Rotuman Islanders 1. It also allowed for a non-Melanesian to become prime minister.

Changes within Democratic Consolidation Period:

20a) May 17, 1999 (general elections) – The ruling Fijian Political Party (FPP) was swept from power by a coalition of parties led by the ethnic Indian-dominated Fiji Labour Party (FLP). Mahendra Chaudhry, leader of the FLP, became Fiji's first ethnic-Indian Prime Minister. Although the FLP had won a majority of parliamentary seats (37), Chaudhry emphasized his desire to establish a broad-based unity government.

2X) Date of Change to Factional-Democratic: July 28, 2000 (coup attempt and formation of transitional government)

Brief Explanation of Change To:

A civilian coup attempt by gunmen led by businessman George Speight stormed the parliament on May 19, 2000, and seized several hostages, including Prime Minister Chaudhry. Ten days later, the Fijian army imposed martial law and suspended the 1997 multi-ethnic constitution. The hostage crisis lasted for 56 days, ending with a negotiated settlement (the Maunikau accord) and the gunmen's surrender to military forces. Speight and his collaborators were eventually arrested and charged with treason. Despite freeing elected Prime Minister Chaudhry, the army chose to dissolve parliament and set up an interim government on July 28, 2000, led by an ethnic-Fijian, Laisenia Qarase, effectively ousting the elected government of Chaudhry. A Constitutional Review Committee was set up to revise the 1997 Constitution in order to guarantee ethnic-Fijian domination of the government, a core demand of Speight-led coup attempt. Meanwhile, Chaudhry began traveling extensively in an attempt to rally international support for re-instating his government.

Identify Main Factions:

- *United Fiji Party (SDL)* — Founded by Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase in 2001. The party brought in most of the Christian Democratic Alliance and other conservative groups. The party was endorsed by the Great Council of Chiefs and draws its support mainly from indigenous Fijians.
- *Fiji Labour Party (FLP)* — Led by Mahendra Chaudhry draws its support mainly from ethnic-Indians.

Changes within Factional Period:

2Xa) October 1, 2001 (new government) – On October 1, 2001, the first elected legislature since the May 1997 coup attempt came into session. The legislature was elected in generally free and fair elections held August 25 – September 1. The convening of the new government marked the end of the transitional government, and the beginning of a new, elected government.

2O) Date of Change from Factional-Democratic: November 24, 2004 (end of opposition challenge)

Brief Explanation of Change From: Fiji Labour Party leader and former Prime Minister Mahendra Chaudhry on November 24, 2004, announced that the party had decided to withdraw from the protracted and fruitless negotiations on the share of seats that the FLP was constitutionally entitled to in a multi-party Cabinet, and would now fulfill the role of official opposition in parliament, thus, ending its constitutional challenge.

Changes within Stabilization Period:

Adverse Regime Change: December 2006

2Oa) December 5, 2006 (military coup) – The ethnic Fijian-dominated Qarase government was ousted by a military coup led by Commodore Frank Bainimarama on December 5, 2006. Bainimarama, an ethnic Fijian, claimed to oppose the racially biased policies of the Qarase government and its decision to offer clemency to those individuals behind the 2000 coup and subsequent attacks against the country’s Indo-Fijian population. The 2000 coup attempt had been put down by forces loyal to Bainimarama

2Ob) April 12, 2007 (dissolution of traditional executive body) – President Bainimarama sacked the Great Council of Chiefs on April 12, 2007, and suspended all future meetings after the Chiefs refused to endorse his government and his nomination for vice president. In February 2008, Bainimarama had appointed himself chairman of this body. Traditionally, the Great Council of Chiefs had been in charge of appointing the president, the vice president, and nearly one half of the members of the upper house of parliament. Bainimarama has made known his desire to fundamentally weaken the powers of this body.

2Oc) September 22, 2014 (executive-guided transition) – Parliamentary elections were held on September 17, 2014; the new parliament included substantial opposition representation. Josaia Voreqe “Frank” Bainimarama was elected to the post of Prime Minister on September 22, 2014.

2Od) November 15, 2018 (parliamentary elections) – Fiji held elections on November 14, 2018, and Bainimarama’s FijiFirst party held a slim majority (27 of 51 seats). Fiji appears to be consolidating its executive-guided transition away from ethnically-polarized politics to a more equitable secular system.