My Fellow Fijians,

The Fijian Government is continuing to work closely with the United Nations to secure the safe return of the 44 Fijian peacekeepers currently being detained in Syria.

These men are peacekeepers and there is no reason for their continued detention. We are doing everything in our power to argue this case and secure their release.

The international support for our cause has been overwhelming. Over the weekend, I have been in constant contact with UN officials, foreign leaders and diplomats, who all share our absolute commitment to resolving this situation and bringing our soldiers home safely. I can assure you that the full weight of the international community is behind us – and for this we are grateful.

These men are professional soldiers who have been trained how to handle themselves in extreme situations like this. As a nation, we must have confidence in their training and in the capability of all those involved in negotiating their release.

God bless these soldiers and God bless Fiji.

Good evening.

-ENDS-