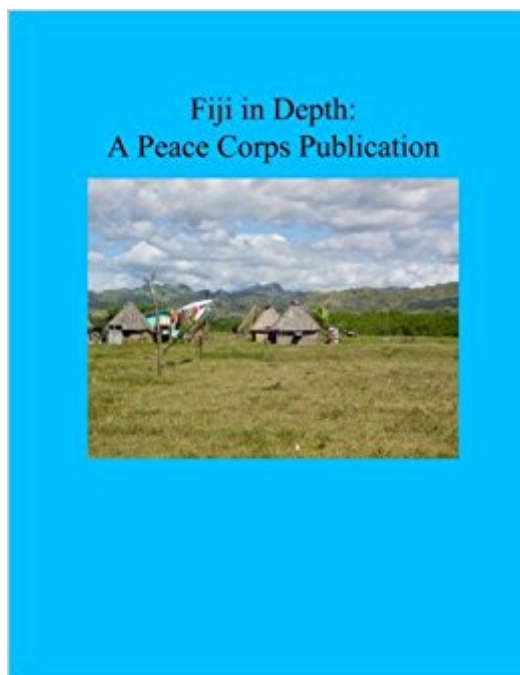


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Fiji In Depth: A Peace Corps Publication



Synopsis

Fiji became a British Crown colony in October of 1874. In 1970, the nation became self-governing under the British Commonwealth. Fiji was converted into a republic after a 1987 military coup, but rejoined the commonwealth in 1997. A similar pattern occurred when George Speight, a businessman who ignited ethnic tensions, led a civilian coup in 2000. Speight and his men took 45 government officials hostage for nearly two months until the military restored order. The interim president, Josefa Iloilo, was eventually sworn in by the Great Council of Chiefs in March 2001. In September 2001, general elections were held and interim Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase was elected to that position. General elections were held again in May 2006, and both the president and prime minister were re-elected to their positions. Despite the election, another coup toppled the government on December 5, 2006. Led by Commodore Voreqe Frank Bainimarama, the military peacefully, but forcefully, removed Qarase and Iloilo. On January 4, 2007, Commodore Bainimarama returned executive power to ousted President Iloilo. Fiji is currently led by Prime Minister Bainimarama and President Iloilo's appointed successor, Ratu Epeli Nailatikau.

Book Information

Series: Peace Corps

Paperback: 52 pages

Publisher: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform (September 18, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1502411725

ISBN-13: 978-1502411723

Product Dimensions: 8.5 x 0.1 x 11 inches

Shipping Weight: 6.7 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

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Best Sellers Rank: #4,423,667 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #58 in Books > Travel >

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