

The coordinator of Oceania Pride Jasmine Kaur strongly condemns the Prime Minister's comments on the subject of same-sex marriage.

The Prime Minister, Mr. Voreqe Bainimara had earlier this week made a statement declaring that Fiji will never allow same-sex marriage as long as his government is in power.

As per the 2013 constitution, Fiji is a secular state. As such, Mr. Bainimarama's comment stating Fiji is a "God-fearing country and that same-sex marriage would never happen in Fiji" is unconstitutional.

Oceania Pride believes that Mr. Bainimarama as the democratically elected leader of the nation must keep his religious beliefs personal.

Oceania Pride also believes that Mr. Bainimarama should not have said that "same-sex marriage would never happen in Fiji".

The people of this country at the very least must have a say on this very serious issue through constructive debate and discussion.

Passing a judgment even before it has been raised with the general public is highly inappropriate for a democratically elected leader especially acting on non-credible and fake news stunts.

Statement such as these are reminiscent of the days when Mr. Bainimarama was considered a dictator.

The Prime Minister in his remarks was in contradiction of Section 26 of the 2013 constitution.

Despite our LGBTIQ community's constitutional right to be protected against discrimination, we have faced an increased backlash in the past few days especially on social media.

His statement has acted as fuel to fire to the community who target the LGBTIQ community in Fiji.

There is no doubt that this is directly related to the highly irresponsible comments made by the Prime Minister.

Oceania Pride would also like to remind Mr. Bainimarama that his comment comes at a time when the Prince of Norway is visiting the country.

Norway, a liberal Scandinavian country has legalized same-sex marriage in 2009.

Oceania Pride is urging the Prime Minister to employ control while making remarks on such sensitive issues where it's repercussions would cause him embarrassment internationally and question his understanding of the 2013 constitution – which this government never ceases praise.

For further clarification or questions please contact Jasmine Kaur on [oceania.pride@gmail.com](mailto:oceania.pride@gmail.com) or 8023058.