



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**6th January 2025**

**Media Statement:** Save the Children Condemns Recent Child Abuse Video, Calls for Urgent Action on Positive Parenting and Child Protection

**Statement from the CEO of Save the Children**

Save the Children is deeply concerned and disturbed by the recent video circulating on social media, depicting the horrific acts of violence against two young children. The video shows a father subjecting his children to physical and emotional abuse, apparently in response to their struggles with learning.

We strongly condemn any form of violence against children, regardless of the circumstances. Children have the right to grow up in an environment where they are safe, nurtured, and supported in their development, both emotionally and academically. The distress caused by this incident is unimaginable, and our hearts go out to the children involved, who deserve love, care, and protection, not fear and trauma.

We are encouraged to hear that the relevant authorities, including law enforcement, are investigating this case. However, this incident highlights a much larger issue, in that violence as a form of discipline is sadly still all too common in our society, and it can have long-lasting and devastating effects on children's development, health, and overall well-being.

Research consistently shows that children who experience violence, neglect, or abuse are more likely to face lifelong challenges, including difficulties with learning, mental health struggles, and damaged social relationships. These forms of punishment are not effective in promoting positive behaviors or helping children thrive. Instead, they create a cycle of trauma that can persist for generations.

Save the Children urges the Government, civil society organizations, and communities to intensify efforts to raise awareness about positive, non-violent parenting. The widespread use of violent disciplinary methods stems from a lack of understanding about child development, and what constitutes effective, loving parenting. Education and awareness programs for parents—particularly young and first-time parents—are essential to ensure that all children are treated with the respect, care, and dignity they deserve.

Furthermore, we call for the continued strengthening of child protection mechanisms, including improved reporting systems, accessible counselling services, and safe spaces for

children to heal. We also urge all members of the community to be vigilant and proactive in reporting any form of violence or neglect, rather than sharing harmful content online, which only exacerbates the trauma experienced by victims. Late last year, Cabinet endorsed new laws for children, the Child Care & Protection Act and the Child Justice Act which are laws derived from the Child Welfare Act and the Juvenile Act and are expected to strengthen children's access to justice and better care and protection systems that support their safety, welfare and protection. The Child Care & Protection Act has provisions that supports the general public to raise concerns and make reports of any concerns regarding the safety of any child or children to the Department of Children or Police or other regulated professional. It is important that the general public also know that, their confidentiality is protected through this legislation as well.

Save the Children is committed to working alongside the Government, NGOs, and local communities to ensure that the rights and welfare of every child are safeguarded. Save the Children in collaboration with key partners such as the Department of Children, the Fiji Police Force Community Policing Division and the iTaukei Affairs Board is currently implementing the Collective Action to End Violence Against Children Project in 24 communities in the central division that focuses on strengthening families' relationships with their children through positive parenting learnings. The project has been effective in rebuilding positive relations within the families through programs such as Safe Families- Parenting without Violence where parents, guardians and carers are trained in various technical child protection contexts such as understanding children's development and needs, nurturing children with warmth and structure as well as understanding children's rights, responsibilities and supporting them through effective participation and learning spaces.

We stand in solidarity with all efforts to prevent violence against children and promote their right to a life free from harm. Together, we can break the cycle of abuse and provide every child with the opportunity to grow, learn, and thrive in a safe and loving environment.

**For more information please contact:**

**For media enquiries please contact [Vika.Ramara@savethechildren.org](mailto:Vika.Ramara@savethechildren.org)**

**For more information, please send us an email on [Info.Fiji@savethechildren.org](mailto:Info.Fiji@savethechildren.org) or contact us at +(679) 3313178**

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