



## MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND MEDICAL SERVICES

**Honorable Dr Ratu Atonio Lalabalavu**

**Parliamentary Statement**  
**Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2024**

- Honourable Speaker Sir,
- Honourable Members of this August House,
- Distinguished Guests;
- Members of the public virtually viewing this Parliamentary session;

Good morning / afternoon to you all;

Mr Speaker Sir, please allow me to brief this August house on another issue that needs a Coordinated, multi sectoral, Public Health Response. Working very closely with the National Committee on the Prevention of Suicide (NCOPS), we will be commemorating World Suicide Prevention Day on Tuesday 10th September with the launch of the Suicide Prevention 2024 theme, **"Change the Narrative,"** with the call to action **"Start the**

**Conversation''**. I am respectfully starting this conversation with you here in this August House and across the Nation, and with our viewers across the globe. We need and must work together. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), approximately **800,000** people die by **suicide every year, which means one person every 40 seconds.**

For Fiji, the suicide and attempted suicide statistics gathered by the Fiji Police Force in the 6 years from 2016 – 2021 revealed a total of **1,276** suicide and attempted cases – an average of 213 cases per year, with about half the number leading to deaths. The highest number of suicide and attempted suicide cases were recorded in 2019 with **244 cases**, and the Western division recorded the most cases every year for the six years.

Changing the narrative on suicide is about transforming how we perceive this complex issue and shifting from a culture of silence and stigma to one of openness, understanding, and support.

The call to action encourages everyone to start the conversation on suicide and suicide prevention. Every conversation, no matter how

small, contributes to a supportive and understanding society. By initiating these vital conversations, we can break down barriers, raise awareness, and create better cultures of support. In our churches, our mosques, our sporting fields, kava sessions lets start this conversation.

Mr Speaker Sir, WHO Comprehensive Mental health Action Plan (2013-2030) underlines suicide as the second most common cause of death among young people (15-29 years) across the globe. Every individual suicide has far reaching emotional, social and economic consequences and deeply affects the families, local communities and nations across the globe.

I am inviting members of this August house, your Ministries and every one listening and watching this session - **please wear a yellow or orange** article of clothing, wrist band, hair band on Tuesday 10 September to indicate that you are advocating that Life is for Living, that a life lost to suicide is a life to many.

I call on my colleagues on this side of the house – get your staff and your students, teachers and all of the Civil Servants to wear orange, yellow on the day and on most days to help advocate for Suicide

Prevention and Save a life. You can also join us on Tuesday 10 September via livestream on MHMS social media page at 8.30am and also at the evening candlelight vigil from 6 -8pm at Ratu Sukuna Park.

1. Thank you Mr Speaker Sir.

## Reference

### 1. SUICIDE AND ATTEMPTED SUICIDE STATISTICS

**Table 1: Suicide & Attempted Suicide Cases by Division (2016 – 2021)**

Divisions	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020		2021	
	S	A/S	S	A/S	S	A/S	S	A/S	S	A/S	S	A/S
Central	2	2	0	3	8	2	4	1	3	1	2	1
South	22	9	22	18	19	17	25	25	19	11	21	15
West	46	53	49	52	48	54	56	65	40	65	29	67
East	16	12	23	17	23	10	14	12	17	16	9	18
North	16	29	19	22	17	15	24	18	15	15	11	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>113</b>
G/Total	<b>207</b>		<b>225</b>		<b>213</b>		<b>244</b>		<b>202</b>		<b>185</b>	

**Keys: S - Suicide and A/S - Attempted Suicide**

(Source Fiji Police Force)

2. <https://www.police.gov.fj/view/2087>
3. <https://www.fijitimes.com.fj/suicide-a-major-public-health-concern-in-fiji/>
4. <https://www.iasp.info/#:~:text=IASP%20is%20delighted%20to%20announce,%3A%20%E2%80%9CStart%20the%20Conversation%E2%80%9D.>
5. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240026643>
6. <https://www.richardsonhealthcare.com/world-suicide-prevention-day-2024/>