



@CCoFiji



Consumer Council of Fiji



www.consumersfiji.org



Mobile App

08 August 2025

PRESS RELEASE

Predatory Moneylenders Allegedly Targeting Regional Residents

Allegations have surfaced of a predatory moneylending scheme in Fiji that is allegedly targeting regional workers and students from other Pacific Island countries, exploiting their financial vulnerabilities while charging interest rates far above the legal limit.

In a particularly concerning case registered with the Consumer Council of Fiji, a regional worker living in Fiji reported seeking a loan late last year and borrowing approximately \$5,000 from a husband-and-wife lending team. As a condition for the loan, the lender confiscated the borrower's bank card in October 2024, a practice strictly prohibited by law, and did not return it until the Council intervened. Between January and June 2025, the lender withdrew a total of \$17,490 from the borrower's account. When the Council requested records to justify these deductions, it was discovered that the moneylender was not keeping any proper documentation of loans or repayments, in breach of mandatory record-keeping requirements.

During its investigation, the Council also found that while the wife held a valid licence under the *Moneylenders Act*, her husband was not authorised to conduct lending. Despite this, he was allegedly posing as a registered moneylender, distributing his own business cards, and dealing directly with clients.

Further inquiries revealed that borrowers in such cases were being charged 40% interest per month, despite the law capping the maximum rate at 12.5% per annum. The alleged targeting of regional workers and students appears calculated, with the lenders exploiting situations where individuals face delayed remittances from home or other financial setbacks, later demanding excessive repayments once those funds arrive.

Consumer Council of Fiji Chief Executive Officer Seema Shandil strongly condemned the alleged practices. She said this case was a stark reminder of how opportunistic and exploitative some operators can be, particularly towards those who have come to Fiji in search of education or employment. "Many of these individuals are far from home, with limited support networks, making them easy prey for illegal and unethical moneylending. The Council will not stand by while vulnerable consumers are trapped in cycles of debt by those who deliberately flout the law. We will continue to expose and refer such cases for enforcement action, and we urge anyone affected to come forward," she said.

The Council's investigation is ongoing, and the matter will be referred to the relevant agencies for further action, if required. Consumers are reminded to exercise caution when borrowing

Head Office

Level 5 Vanua House
Victoria Parade GPO, Suva
Phone: 3300792/3310183
CEO: 3305864
Fax: 3300115
Email: complaints@consumersfiji.org

Lautoka/West

Suite 4 Popular Building
Vidilo Street
P.O. Box 5396, Lautoka
Phone: 6664987
Email: consumerlwk@connect.com.fj

Labasa/North

Shop 2, Mudaliar Investment
Sangam Avenue Street
P.O. Box 64, Labasa
Phone: 8812559
Email: colbs@connect.com.fj



@CCoFiji



Consumer Council of Fiji



www.consumersfiji.org



Mobile App

money, to verify that a lender is licensed, and to refuse to surrender bank cards or PIN numbers to anyone. Awareness of the legal interest rate limits is crucial in avoiding exploitation.

The Council encourages all consumers who feel that they may have been exploited or are struggling to repay after engaging with a moneylender, to lodge a formal complaint. The Council can assist in seeking redress, or a debt restructure, and ensuring that your rights as a consumer are protected. The Council can be reached via its toll-free National Consumer Helpline 155, or through Complaints@consumersfiji.org.

Head Office

Level 5 Vanua House
Victoria Parade GPO, Suva
Phone: 3300792/3310183
CEO: 3305864
Fax: 3300115
Email: complaints@consumersfiji.org

Lautoka/West

Suite 4 Popular Building
Vidilo Street
P.O. Box 5396, Lautoka
Phone: 6664987
Email: consumerlwk@connect.com.fj

Labasa/North

Shop 2, Mudaliar Investment
Sangam Avenue Street
P.O. Box 64, Labasa
Phone: 8812559
Email: colbs@connect.com.fj