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Mr Speight: No Indians in the new government

Rebel leader George Speight says he will stage another coup in Fiji if there is another ethnic Indian prime minister.

Mr Speight, who also said he would not take a position in the Fijian government due to be chosen on Friday.

He was speaking to the BBC after releasing deposed ethnic Indian prime minister Mahendra Chaudhry and 17 other hostages.

The rebel leader overthrew the democratically elected, multi-ethnic government after storming parliament eight weeks ago, claiming power for indigenous Fijians.



Mr Chaudhry: Released after two months

Mr Speight dismissed international condemnation of the coup and accused Australian and New Zealand of being hypocrites.

He told the BBC he was pleased Fiji's Great Council of Chiefs had chosen Fijian chief Ratu Josefa Iloilo as the new president.

"He's a supporter of Fijians. He's a Fijian chief by blood and by birth and by status. He's also been a supporter of the case -

“There will never, ever be a government led by an Indian

George Speight

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► **Rebel leader**
George Speight
"There will never
be an Indian led
government in
Fiji"
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every Fijian is," he said.

The rebel leader said he expected he would be asked to join the new government, but would decline.

No Indians

Mr Speight said there was absolutely no place in the new government for ethnic Indians.

And he warned that if Fiji ended up with another government led by an Indian he would have no hesitation in taking exactly the same action as he did on 19 May when his gunmen stormed parliament.

"There will never, ever be a government led by an Indian, ever, in Fiji," Mr Speight added.

"But more particularly it's the system of government that brought them here - and that's constitutional democracy, the common law version - that has gone. And that will never return."



Fiji's Indians make up 44% of the population

Hypocrites

Fiji's powerful Pacific neighbours, Australia and New Zealand, have both threatened sanctions if democracy is not restored.

But Mr Speight said: "We don't care what Australia and New Zealand think, quite frankly.

"I consider their governments to be hypocritical and totally ignorant of their own miserable histories that are far worse than ours," he added, referring to the oppression of indigenous Aborigines and Maoris.

"The migrant populations, mainly Europeans, are guilty of greater crimes in those countries - sanctioned by democracy - than what the Indians have been able to achieve [here]", Mr Speight said.

"That's why I've stepped in to stop the Indians, or any other migrant culture, achieving in this country what the Europeans have achieved in Australia or New Zealand."

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