

Confiscation disappoints chiefs

By SERAFINA SILAITOGA

THE province of Macuata is not happy with the conduct of government officials who confiscated seven turtles while traditional ceremonies were being held at the Macuata Provincial Council meeting in Nabubu Village, Namuka this week.

The Tui Namuka, Ratu Tevita Niumataiwalu, expressed his disappointment, saying the district would write a letter of complaint to Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka about the conduct of Fisheries Ministry officials.

The chief said traditional protocols were followed to catch the turtles for the traditional function for the President and Tui Macuata, Ratu Wiliame Katonivere.

Ratu Tevita said his men didn't have

to go out to sea to catch the turtles which showed up at the village shore on Monday evening before the traditional ceremony on Tuesday.

Such occurrences, Ratu Tevita told the meeting, always happen when traditional protocols were upheld and followed before any function in his district.

During the traditional ceremony for Ratu Wiliame, those presenting the *tabua* said the turtles showed up on the village shore because they knew their chief would arrive.

Yesterday, another Macuata chief, who didn't want to be named, contacted the ministry to express his disappointment.

"There are procedures to follow. Why couldn't they wait until the traditional ceremony was over?"

"They confiscated the turtles during the traditional ceremony for our high chief and we are not happy," he said.

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Ministry of Fisheries officers release a turtle back into the sea. Picture: SERAFINA SILAITOGA