

Press Release

**10 years and no justice – the enforced disappearance of
journalist and blogger Ahmed Rilwan Abdullah**

8 August 2024

Ahmed Rilwan Abdullah was abducted and disappeared on 8 August 2014 following repeated death threats by Islamic extremists in the Maldives. He was targeted for his criticism of religious fundamentalism and violent extremism through his journalism, personal blog and social media accounts.

The family of Rilwan continues to wait for any official information surrounding his enforced disappearance and possible murder. A criminal trial from September 2017 to August 2018 acquitted suspects with the judge noting critical matters of negligence in the investigation and prosecution that failed a conviction.

In 2018, President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih was elected to power with one key pledge – justice. The Presidential Commission on Deaths and Disappearances (DDCOM) formed by Solih was disbanded after a full term, with nothing to show for the promised justice to Rilwan’s family. Suspects arrested by the Commission were released and charges dismissed by the Criminal Court for lack of evidence. The Commission refused to provide an official account of the findings of their investigations. On 25 December 2023 the Prosecutor General stated that he would not be appealing the case against three suspects.

While President Muizzu’s government has promised that the DDCOM reports will be made public, key suspects named by the DDCOM in connection to Rilwan’s forceful disappearance have been awarded senior positions by the current administration.

We call on **President Muizzu** to publish the reports of the DDCOM without further delay, and to suspend the political appointments of individuals suspected of connection to the forceful disappearance and possible murder of Ahmed Rilwan.

We call on the **People’s Majlis of the Maldives** to conduct a thorough audit of the work of the DDCOM, including the reasons behind the failure to conclude full investigations into all of the 27 cases assigned to them and the failure to bring any convictions in any of the cases, as well as their refusal to provide a report of the investigations to the families.

We further call on the **Human Rights Commission of the Maldives** to conduct a public enquiry into the enforced disappearance of Ahmed Rilwan Abdullah and related violations of human rights of his family that have ensued since 8 August 2014.

--- ENDS.

Endorsed by:

Transparency Maldives (TM)

Project Zinmaadhaaru

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Zero Waste Maldives

Maldives Journalists Association (MJA)

International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)

Human Rights Watch (HRW)

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