

**To pave way for a competitive presidential election in 2018 and to allow the Parliament to carry out its mandate, Transparency Maldives calls on authorities to immediately enforce the Supreme Court ruling**

Transparency Maldives (TM) calls on all parties and institutions to respect democratic principles and the fundamental human rights enshrined in the Constitution and International Covenants that the Maldives is party to, at this politically tumultuous juncture. It is our hope that the Supreme Court decision on 1 February 2018 paves way for the functioning of state institutions that have all but become defunct. TM calls on the government and state authorities to immediately implement the provisions in the ruling that may facilitate the proper administration of the Parliament and allow for a free and competitive presidential election in 2018.

The Parliament is a key institution that can play a crucial role in resolving the current political crisis. The indefinite delay of commencing parliamentary sessions is thus a worrying development. Although the Government has maintained that it is committed to implementing the provisions of the Supreme Court order, the delay in implementing the order, the deployment of the military to the Parliament, and comments from the Attorney General and other government individuals worryingly imply that the Government may not follow the court order.

The political prisoners ordered to be released under the Supreme Court ruling have all been deprived of a fair trial. We call upon the State to ensure their constitutional right to due process through a fair and transparent retrial that conforms to internationally accepted standards.

We also note with concern that some individuals who have been ordered to be released under the Supreme Court order are accused of serious allegations such as the grand corruption case involving Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Company. Therefore, it is imperative that the review process closely take into account the nature of their accused crimes and ensure the judicial process is devoid from undue influence and/or any attempts to hide or destroy crucial evidence.

The last few years have witnessed several regressive constitutional and legislative changes that have been specifically catered to benefit specific individuals through abuse of power and corrupt practices. The root of the problems the country face today are the result of prioritizing the interest of the few over public interest, for political gain. Therefore, we call upon the Parliament to utilize this opportunity to remedy the mistakes of the past and to ensure the impediments against the constitutionally guaranteed freedom of expression and the right to freedom of peaceful assembly without prior state permission, be unconditionally removed.

One of the most fundamental principles of democracy is to ensure the separation of powers. At the same time, it is also imperative that a proper system of checks and balances be in place, to ascertain no one power of the State can attain undue supremacy. We hope that the current crisis, instead of being a momentary effort to garner short-term benefits, results in meaningful attempts for the long-term sustainability of the democratic system, protection and promotion of the fundamental rights of the people, and an assurance of political, social and economic justice in the country.

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