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Allegations of voter registration fraud must be addressed for a credible election

Allegations of the government using state institutions for fraudulent voter registrations to favour the incumbent leads to further deterioration of the low levels of trust in the electoral systems.

While the extent of the re-registration fraud is unclear, the widespread complaints against the process of re-registration indicates the possibility of disenfranchisement of significant number of voters. Complaints that have emerged include allegations that the ruling party scrutinized the re-registration forms of civil servants and selectively submitted forms of their supporters for re-registration, thereby denying the suffrage of possible opposition supporters. Additionally, Transparency Maldives (TM) have received complaints including personal accounts of individuals whose expired identification cards have recently been renewed without their knowledge. These deliberate and illegal acts could disenfranchise voters and deprive them of their constitutionally guaranteed right to vote. It is, therefore, imperative for the Department of National Registrations and the Election Commission and state institutions to address actions that may subvert the democratic aspirations of the people of Maldives.

The integrity of an election is not determined solely on the events of the election day, but also depend on the electoral environment. The current electoral environment provides room for the public to disregard the election results unless the government and the Election Commission are able to address prevailing electoral issues, including the allegations of voter registration fraud.

TM considers the aforementioned reasons as serious hurdles to a credible election. TM calls on all state institutions to immediately ensure an environment of transparency and inclusiveness in electoral processes. TM also calls on the Election Commission to abide by the recommendations of our 'Pre Election Assessment Report,' to address the declining trust in electoral processes. In particular, TM calls for the expansion of the role of the National Advisory Committee in the 2018 election to ensure inclusivity in electoral processes, as practiced in past national elections.

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