



CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS RENEW CALLS TO END IMPUNITY FOR CRIMES AGAINST JOURNALISTS IN THE MALDIVES

28 NOVEMBER 2023: Maldives Journalists Association (MJA), Transparency Maldives, Association for Democracy in the Maldives (ADM), International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), Human Rights Watch and Reporters Without Borders (RSF) urge the Government of Maldives to expedite investigations and for the relevant authorities to pursue, where evidence permits, prosecutions to end impunity for serious crimes against journalists in the Maldives.

We are deeply concerned that the criminal court, on 22 November 2023, dropped charges against the accused in the murders of journalist Ahmed Rilwan and blogger Yameen Rasheed.

In previous court proceedings for the charges filed in these years-old cases, the court has pointed out the negligence on the part of the investigating agencies and prosecutors.

Despite the government elected 2018-2023 pledging to swiftly investigate and resolve these cases, it is deeply concerning that the charges filed against alleged perpetrators after years of investigation, were thrown out by the court citing lack of enough evidence to prosecute the cases. This raises serious questions about the work and decisions made by the investigating authorities during these years.

It is concerning that in such cases of immense public interest, the details of the investigation are not publicized, and other details are hushed up leading to a total lack of transparency from investigating agencies. This along with the fact that multiple governments have used these cases to further their political ambitions has led to a complete erosion of public trust in the investigation and judicial processes.

The lack of justice or prevailing impunity in the major cases mentioned above creates a chilling and fearful atmosphere for journalists and empowers the perpetrators of crimes against journalists.

To address the above issues, these organizations call upon the Government of Maldives and the relevant prosecutorial authorities to:

1. Publish complete information and reports of the investigation conducted by the Commission on Deaths and Disappearances from 2018-2023.
2. Swiftly and urgently, complete the investigation process in the above-mentioned cases and prosecute perpetrators without delay.
3. Launch fresh investigations in to the agencies and individuals whose negligence from the beginning of these cases to the current stages has caused irreparable damage to the investigation
4. Publicly disclose the reason(s) for the Prosecutor General's decision to not appeal the cases after they were dismissed by the court.

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Association for Democracy in the Maldives (ADM),
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