

Press statement on the opening of polls for the second round of the 2023 Presidential Election

30 September 2023 - Transparency Maldives observer network has a wide national coverage spanning the Greater Male' Area, all the atolls, resorts, industrial islands and prisons, as well as abroad in Colombo, Sri Lanka, Trivandrum, India, and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. We thank the over 490 observers and volunteers deployed across the country for their dedication in observing and assisting in the election observation processes.

In observing the 2023 Presidential Election, Transparency Maldives is assessing both the election-day proceedings and have monitored the larger electoral and political environment during the pre-election since May 2023. The observations are carried out at ballot boxes which have been selected through a random sample. The results we report from our observation are generalisable to the entire country and have been obtained by our observers at 297 ballot boxes, which is over 50% of the total ballot boxes. The following results are based on the observation at the time of opening of polls.

The opening procedure went well, with all polling stations open by 9:00 am. 94.3% of polling stations opened within the first 10 minutes of the required opening time, and 5.4% of the polling stations opened between 8:10 – 8:30 am.

Nearly all polling station officials were in place at all polling stations.

The materials required for voting were present, the ballot papers were counted and reconciled at all polling stations, and all ballot boxes were verified as empty at the start of the voting process.

Candidates were well represented at polling stations. Observers from PPM/PNC coalition were present at 85% of the polling stations while 74% of polling stations had observers from MDP/AP coalition.

Transparency Maldives also notes that police were operating outside at 97% of the observed polling stations at the opening time.

Observers concluded that the polling stations were set up to ensure a secret vote in the vast majority of cases (96%). This was less clear in about 4% of all cases observed. These polling stations will be closely watched by our observers. We call on the polling officials, observers, monitors and voters to adhere to the guidelines set by the Elections Commission and ensure that the secrecy of vote is guaranteed throughout election day.

We encourage all parties to maintain peace during the voting process and after the preliminary results are announced.

Transparency Maldives encourages all those eligible to exercise their right to vote. Our observers will be present at polling stations during voting, vote counting, and the announcement of preliminary results.

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