



**Joint open letter to the Maldives Speaker of The People's Majlis:
Call for justice for murdered human rights defender and blogger Yameen
Rasheed**

Your Excellency, Honourable Speaker of The People's Majlis, President Mohamed Nasheed.

We, the Maldivian Democracy Network (MDN) and the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA) write to call for action to ensure justice for Yameen Rasheed.

Today marks four years since Maldivian human rights defender and blogger Yameen Rasheed was brutally stabbed to death at his home, after Maldivian authorities failed to respond to repeated threats to his life. The perpetrators of this heinous crime continue to evade justice as the family of Rasheed struggle with Maldivian authorities in their efforts to expedite the process. Failure to make notable progress towards justice for Yameen Rasheed four years after his murder is emblematic of the level of impunity and deteriorating situation of rule of law in the Maldives.

We would like to draw your attention to some key aspects in Yameen Rasheed's case that we are particularly concerned by. We believe that the People's Majlis, as the primary organ for accountability, needs to be reminded of its responsibility to ensure that Maldivian authorities fulfil their legal obligations.

Failure to hold the Maldives Police Service accountable for allegations of negligence raised by the family of Yameen Rasheed in 2017.

A civil lawsuit alleging police negligence for having ignored repeated reports of death threats received by Yameen Rasheed prior to his murder was rejected by the court, citing that the court had no jurisdiction to hear the case. The case was appealed and there has been no progress at the High Court.

We request you and the Majlis to invoke accountability measures into the conduct of the Maldives Police Service prior to, and following the killing of Yameen Rasheed.

Persistent delays and irregularities in the Criminal Court trial of suspects charged with killing Yameen Rasheed.

We request the Majlis to thoroughly review the allegations of unlawful conduct in relation to the initial in-camera hearings in 2017, the suspension of the trial throughout 2020 and persistent delays with the trial in contravention of the Article 42 of the Constitution and the Section 142 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

Since the resumption of the trial in February 2021,¹ Rasheed's family has specifically requested the Prosecutor General to represent the State in the case. We have duly observed that the conduct of the prosecution in this case appears neglectful, inexperienced and does not foster the family's confidence, especially in light of the fact that prosecutorial failures is one of the main reasons that those accused of forcibly disappearing Ahmed Rilwan Abdulla were acquitted in 2018. We reiterate our [joint call](#) for expeditious and credible completion of the ongoing investigations and judicial processes. The trial continues to be fraught with discrepancies and concerns over the credibility of investigations, opaqueness of proceedings, and allegations of evidence tampering.

Lack of progress in the investigation by the Presidential Commission on Deaths and Disappearances

The Presidential Commission on Deaths and Disappearances halted investigation into the murder of Yameen Rasheed following the Prosecutor General's objection citing the ongoing criminal trial. Yameen Rasheed's family has not been made aware of any substantive progress in the investigation by the Commission since its establishment. We are particularly concerned that the Commission may be facing pressure that could hinder the investigation. The fact that, two and half years after its establishment, the Commission has not been able to complete investigations or secure a conviction in any of the 27 cases that it is mandated to investigate is an extremely worrying indicator of the difficulties the Commission faces.

We request the Majlis to look into the reasons behind the continued delays in the work of the Commission and ensure its ability to conduct a free, impartial, transparent and thorough investigation into each of the 27 cases it is mandated with.

We also request you to ensure that the Commission has the necessary resources, competence and security to conduct their work in a timely and professional manner.

¹ <https://democracymaldives.org/?p=123>

We urge, Your Excellency, to conduct a full oversight review into these issues and concerns regarding the murder of Yameen Rasheed through the respective committees of the People's Majlis.

We thank you for your time and attention.

Signed,

Maldivian Democracy Network (MDN)

The Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)