

**FIDH – International Federation for Human Rights**  
*and its member organization*  
**Maldivian Democracy Network (MDN)**

**Joint statement**

**Maldives: United Nations body demand reinstatement of Maldivian Democracy Network**

**The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the Maldivian Democracy Network (MDN) welcome the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Committee’s (CCPR’s) recommendations to the Maldives on key civil and political rights and urge the Maldivian government to take immediate action to implement them, including the recommendations to reinstate MDN and return its seized funds.**

Paris, 5 August 2024: On 25 July 2022, the CCPR issued its concluding observations on the situation of civil and political rights in the Maldives, following the review of the country’s second periodic report under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). The review was held on 9 and 10 July 2024 in Geneva, Switzerland. The CCPR monitors state parties’ compliance with their legal obligations under the ICCPR. The Maldives is a state party to the ICCPR.

In the concluding observations, the CCPR expressed concern over a wide range of issues, many of which had been raised by FIDH and MDN in [their joint shadow report](#) released ahead of the CCPR’s review.

For example, with regard to LGBTIQ+ rights, the CCPR noted the lack of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation and expressed its concern over the high levels of violence, discrimination, and stigmatization faced by people on the basis of their sexual orientation. The CCPR highlighted in particular: the criminalization of same-sex consensual relations; the lack of prohibition on incitement to violence, hatred, or discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity; the practice of exposing a person’s private information online, targeting people on the basis of their sexual orientation; and the low level of investigation and prosecution of crimes targeting people on the basis of their sexual orientation while the victims of those crimes are investigated and charged with sexual offenses.

On the issue of impunity for past human rights violations, the CPPR called for the now-disbanded Commission on Deaths and Disappearances (DDCom) to publicize the findings of its investigations into 27 cases, including the deaths of human rights defender Yameen Rasheed and former Member of Parliament Dr. Afrasheem Ali, and the enforced disappearance of journalist Ahmed Rilwan Abdullah, with their families and make them public.

The CCPR expressed concern over the prevalence of torture as well as the low rate of prosecutions and sanctions imposed on perpetrators. The CCPR found that the Ombudsperson’s Office for Transitional Justice lacked effectiveness in investigating allegations of torture that took

place in the Maldives prior to 2008 and recommended the government take all necessary measure to investigate all human rights violations, including allegations of torture that took place in the Maldives prior to 2008, prosecute those responsible, and provide compensation and rehabilitation services to the victims.

The CCPR was also concerned by reports of harassment and violence against journalists and human rights defenders, and threats, intimidation, and reprisals against civil society organizations, including the de-registration without due process of MDN and the attacks and threats of blasphemy against three other civil society organizations. The Committee called for the reinstatement of MDN “with due process,” the return of its seized funds, as well as for prompt, thorough, and impartial investigation into all complaints against human rights defenders and organizations and compensation to victims.

With regard to freedom of religion or belief, the CCPR expressed concern over the restrictions under the Religious Unity Act and the “significant impact” they have on the enjoyment of rights by migrant workers in the Maldives. The CCPR was further concerned by the use of the Religious Unity Act to target human rights defenders for their promotion of the right to freedom of religion. The CCPR called on the government to withdraw the reservation to Article 18 of the ICCPR on the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, which the Committee found to be “incompatible with the object and purpose of the Covenant.”

FIDH and MDN urge the government to take steps to implement the over 100 recommendations made by the CCPR without delay, and hold regular, participatory, and inclusive consultations with members of civil society to seek their inputs on the implementation process and provide updates on its progress.