

## Press Release

19 December 2025

### Maldives must respect the rule of law: reinstate MDN, return seized funds

Today marks **six years since the arbitrary deregistration of the Maldivian Democracy Network (MDN)—an act that rewarded extremism and silenced one of the country’s most credible human rights voices**. After years of intimidation by violent non-state actors, attacks against MDN escalated in December 2019. **Instead of safeguarding civil society, the Ibrahim Mohamed Solih government played directly into extremists’ hands by deregistering MDN without due process**. The timing was no coincidence: it coincided with the roll-out of MDN’s research and advocacy on transitional justice for past atrocities.

**We continue to seek justice in the Maldives** despite systematic delays and denials.

**The Civil Court** bench has been “deliberating” **since November 2022** on the admissibility of a case challenging the unlawful freezing, emptying, and closure of our bank accounts by the State Bank of India.

**The High Court** has stalled our appeal for **over two years** and, for more than ten months, ignored a third-party intervention request from **the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)**.

**The Government** has failed to respond to our High Court appeal—within the Court’s deadlines or at all—to **our appeal, to our requests for clarification of allegations, or to our right of reply since November 2019**. Yet it continues to deny responsibility, despite having the full authority to course-correct.

**We call on the Maldivian authorities to immediately:**

- Implement the July 2024 recommendations of **the UN Human Rights Committee to reinstate MDN’s registration and return the funds seized** from MDN’s accounts.
- **Hold all state officials** engaging in intimidation and arbitrary actions against human rights defenders **accountable**.
- **Enact legislation that clearly protects** the assets of individuals and legal entities held by banks operating in the Maldives.

Over the past two decades of human rights work, MDN has been at the forefront of defending human rights in the Maldives—exposing long-standing abuses of power, documenting violations of civil and political rights, and standing with survivors of torture, police brutality, arbitrary detention, and unfair trials in their pursuit of justice. This attempt to erase MDN has not silenced us. Forced into exile, we remain resolute and undeterred, continuing our work to defend human rights, accountability, and dignity in the Maldives.

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ENDS.