

10 December 2020

Press Statement on the Occasion of International Human Rights Day 2020

As we mark 72 years of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights today, we extend our well wishes and support to all those who work to protect and promote human rights around the world. Today, we remember the immense sacrifices of human rights defenders and stand together in solidarity for equality and a life lived in dignity for every human being.

The year 2020 has tested us all with the COVID-19 pandemic that continues to plague the world. The virus has taken millions of lives and disrupted human connectivity to devastation. We remind the State that the fundamental rights of the people must be guaranteed especially in times of crisis. We believe that protection of human dignity and fundamental rights should be the guiding principle of the COVID-19 recovery effort.

We applaud two landmark laws recently passed by the Majlis.

The Transitional Justice Act is the beacon of hope for too many women, men, and children of our nation who have suffered from systematic and gross human rights violations for too long under successive regimes of the past. We hope that the State will implement the transitional justice processes adequately and with sincere intent.

The recently passed Police Service Bill presents a promising opportunity to reform an institution tainted by a history of human rights abuses and inhumane treatment. We welcome the provision which will ensure the reappointment of commissioned officers, with the exception of the Commissioner of Police, after vetting their records for violations of human rights and democratic principles.

We call on the Government of Maldives to ratify the Maldives Police Act without delay and draw on this unique and historical opportunity to reform the police.

At this crucial juncture where civil society voices are paramount, however sadly too few, we have begun our work with much hope to work together with civil society to ensure an inclusive and sustainable future for our nation.

ENDS.