



Press Release

Rilwan & Yameen Foundation

8 August 2021

Seven years of impunity for the perpetrators of Ahmed Rilwan's forced disappearance

Ahmed Rilwan Abdulla, 28, was abducted and forcibly disappeared on 8 August 2014 outside his home in Hulhumale. He was an investigative journalist and blogger from the Maldives. Despite continued calls from Rilwan's family and civil society, the Maldives is yet to bring the perpetrators of this heinous crime to justice or determine the fate of the young journalist. Some arrests, made in 2014, were followed by a Criminal Court trial against three individuals, riddled with glaring inconsistencies. The trial court acquitted the accused in August 2018, citing an incomplete police investigation, legal irregularities and prosecutorial shortcomings.

The President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih government pledged justice for Rilwan during the 2018 election campaign and formed the Commission on Deaths and Disappearances in December 2018, shortly after assuming office. The Commission is a statutory transitional justice mechanism mandated to investigate 27 unsolved criminal cases negligently investigated under the previous government. None of its investigations has reached completion prompting prosecution initiatives.

Together with the family and well-wishers, the Rilwan & Yameen Foundation at the Association for Democracy in the Maldives call on the Maldives to:

1. Establish clear and verifiable timeframes for the investigation into the forced disappearance of Ahmed Rilwan Abdulla;
2. Identify and resolve inter-agency challenges between the Commission, the Maldives Police Service, the Prosecutor General's Office and other relevant authorities in appealing the acquittal of Rilwan's abductors;
3. Take legal action against those obstructing the investigations conducted by the Commission;
4. Investigate and carry out prosecution initiatives against current or former state actors implicated in covering up Rilwan's disappearance, including assisting perpetrators to evade due punishment;
5. Investigate and prosecute those implicated in financing and planning Rilwan's forced disappearance.

ENDS.