

Press Release

Rilwan and Yameen Foundation, ADM

28 December 2022

The enforced disappearance of journalist Ahmed Rilwan Abdullah on 8 August 2014: Regarding information provided by the Presidential Commission on Deaths and Disappearances via press conference on 15 December 2022.

We thank the Commission on Deaths and Disappearances for sharing further information about the investigation into the enforced disappearance of journalist and blogger Ahmed Rilwan Abdullah in August 2014. We appreciate that the Commission has revealed new information surrounding the disappearance and eventual fate of Rilwan, and acknowledged the socio-political environment at the time, including how government officials, law enforcement officials, members of the judiciary and politicians collaborated to target and harm individuals expressing moderate to liberal opinions on social media.

We acknowledge the necessity for the Commission to withhold particular information pertaining to the investigation that may pose a threat to witnesses and / or influence a trial or further investigations connected with the case; however, we have concerns regarding the basis of the Commission's conclusion that Ahmed Rilwan Abdullah was in fact murdered and drowned at sea, serious inconsistencies in statements made by the Commission at different times and omission of information that creates many more questions into how the government has treated suspects connected to Rilwan's enforced disappearance.

We further observe that while the Commission has stated that they have determined the fate of Ahmed Rilwan Abdullah to have been abducted, murdered and drowned at sea, the family of Rilwan has not been provided with any form of written conclusion to this effect by the Commission. We

remind President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih that the family of Rilwan cannot be expected to proceed with legal and societal obligations with an assumption of murder made verbally. We also remind President Solih that Rilwan's family, as victims of the case in question, must be treated with priority and that it is the duty of the government to complete necessary legal formalities with the family in a matter concerning a murder.

While we prepare a detailed report following our analysis of the information surrounding this case provided by the Commission on Deaths and Disappearances and other state institutions over the past eight years, **we call on President Solih** to provide the family of Ahmed Rilwan Abdullah, without further delay, a written conclusion of the investigation into the enforced disappearance of Rilwan including the basis of the determination of his murder, clear information about whether individuals suspected of involvement in the disappearance of Rilwan and attacks on other individuals identified by the Commission have been apprehended, and whether the Commission believes it has secured adequate evidence to be able to prove their current assertions in a court of law.

We call on the Speaker and the members of the People's Majlis to engage with relevant institutions to ensure that the government officials, law enforcement officials, members of the judiciary and politicians alleged of involvement in the crimes surrounding the enforced disappearance of Rilwan and the protection of perpetrators of those crimes are investigated and suspended from any position of authority until a complete judicial process is conducted into those matters.

Ends.

For queries contact:

Shahindha Ismail (she/her)

Email: shahindha@democracymaldives.org

Telegram: <https://t.me/Shahindhaismail>