



**ASSOCIATION FOR  
DEMOCRACY  
IN THE MALDIVES**



## **MALDIVES: PROTECT THE RIGHTS TO EXPRESSION, PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION AND HALT THE OBSTRUCTION OF PROTESTS**

**10 January 2023:** We, the undersigned organisations, strongly condemn the continued obstruction of peaceful protests, and the unjustified arrest of peaceful protestors and media personnel by the Maldives Police Service during the series of protests that have taken place as a response to the sentencing of former President Abdulla Yameen.

The freedoms of right to expression, peaceful assembly and association and that of press freedom play a key role in defending human rights. The actions of the Maldives Police Service impede Article 27, 28, 30 and 32 that protect these rights in the Constitution and are in direct contravention to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which Maldives is party to.

We are concerned by the continued use of the criminal law against people exercising their rights to freedom of expression and assembly and the continued impunity of law enforcement agencies in restricting these freedoms. The current restrictions in place in the Peaceful Assembly Act of the Maldives under Section 24 of the Act contravene international human rights law. We further condemn the deliberate rejection of amendments proposed to the Right to Peaceful Assembly Act to remove the requirement to obtain prior permission to the exercise of the right of peaceful assembly, which would bring the law in line with constitutional provisions and the international obligations of the Maldives.

### **CALLS:**

- We call on the Maldives Police Service to facilitate and protect the right to be part of a peaceful assembly without discrimination of any kind, including race, sex, language or religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.
- We call on the Executive and the Legislative branches of the government to work together to bring the law into compliance with international human rights law. As a current member of the UN Human Rights Council, the Maldives must reverse their actions that contravene with their international obligations.
- We call on the Human Rights Commission of the Maldives, National Integrity Commission, as well as the Prosecutor General's Office to ensure a full investigation into the actions of the police and hold the institution and its personnel to account.

**Amnesty International  
Association for Democracy in the Maldives  
Human Rights Watch  
Transparency Maldives**