

Press Statement

8 August 2026

State Secrecy Deepens Twelve-Year Wait for Justice in Ahmed Rilwan Abdullah's Disappearance

As twelve long years pass since the enforced disappearance of journalist and blogger Ahmed Rilwan Abdullah, we renew our call on President Mohamed Muizzu to immediately disclose the findings of the Presidential Commission on Investigation of Murders and Enforced Disappearances (DDCOM). Rilwan's family, the public, and all those who continue to demand truth and accountability have waited far too long. Ahmed Rilwan Abdullah, aged 28, was abducted on 8 August 2014 outside his apartment in Hulhumalé. His disappearance remains one of the Maldives' most serious unresolved attacks on freedom of expression, human rights, and the safety of journalists.

The DDCOM was established by President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih in November 2018 and was legally mandated to conduct criminal investigations. The enforced disappearance of Ahmed Rilwan, along with 26 other cases, was assigned to the Commission.

In May 2024, the Commission informed Rilwan's family and our organisation that it was concluding its work. Despite repeated calls from civil society, the Commission refused to disclose the findings of its investigations and instead handed a confidential report to President Muizzu.

President Muizzu subsequently stated that he would publicly disclose the findings of the DDCOM. He has not delivered on that promise.

We strongly condemn the decision to shut down an ongoing investigation into the enforced disappearance of a human rights defender without public disclosure of the findings or a clear path to accountability. This continued secrecy deepens the pain of Rilwan's family, undermines public trust, and sends a dangerous message about impunity for attacks on journalists and human rights defenders.

We further condemn the silence of the Human Rights Commission of Maldives on this matter. As an independent institution with a legal mandate to protect and promote fundamental rights, the Commission must not remain silent in the face of an unresolved enforced disappearance.

We call on President Muizzu to immediately publish the DDCOM's findings, ensure that all credible leads are pursued through lawful criminal investigations, and provide Rilwan's family and the public with a transparent account of the steps being taken to secure truth, justice, and accountability.

ENDS.