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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Maldives Government rejects accusations of intimidation following opposition's defeat in Parliament on Monday; urges opposition to enter into All Party Talks**

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The Maldives Government today denies accusations of intimidation recently levelled by the opposition and implores the opposition to enter into talks aimed at strengthening the democracy in the Maldives.

This follows Monday's vote of no-confidence against the Speaker of The People's Majlis (Parliament), in which the opposition motion was defeated. The vote was delayed multiple times throughout the day due to unprecedented disruption from opposition MPs, including physically obstructing the Deputy Speaker from conducting the session. Disruptive members were then called upon to leave the chamber to restore order and to allow for the free, fair and transparent vote to proceed.

Since then, the opposition has made repeated claims of intimidation. They use as evidence the investigations currently underway against some members of Parliament. However, the government reiterates that the judiciary and police in the Maldives are independent of government, or party, interference. These cases are based on legal evidence, therefore obligating the police to investigate.

The opposition correctly stated that the police have prevented former President of the Progressive Party of the Maldives (PPM) Maumoon Abdul Gayoom from speaking in the party's name. The former President is no longer a member of the PPM – there are legal, as well as administrative, facts that speak to this – and as such he cannot legally speak for PPM.

Commenting for the Government, the Spokesperson at the President's Office Ibrahim Hussain Shihab said:

*This Administration urges the opposition to act responsibly and to engage with action rather than in words when it comes to responsibly representing the nation, its people and its democratic systems and institutions.*

*We welcome an opposition that holds the government to account. It is a vital pillar to any democracy. However, it seems that the opposition is more interested in stunts to gain recognition and airtime in the international media. Such actions feel irresponsible and damaging to the state and its institutions – it further fosters falsehoods made about the policies, laws, rules and procedures of our nation. Reality and fact continue to be distorted to the detriment of the people of the Maldives.*

*President Yameen has, on multiple occasions, reaffirmed his Administration's commitment to upholding the rule of law. His obligation towards maintaining the independence of the judiciary and the police service remain resolute.*

*This Administration is under no illusion that it somehow has the authority to order a 'crackdown' on the opposition – nor would it take example from previous administrations in exceeding, or going beyond, such authority.*

*Contrary to opposition claims, this Administration has always made clear the desire to re-engage, without pre-conditions, with the opposition. They are free to propose any matters as they see fit for discussions in All Party Talks. The Chair of the All Party Talks, last Wednesday, reaffirmed his commitment towards re-engagement, in the larger interests of moving the nation forward towards greater development and harmony.*

*The Administration has, consistently, shown commitment towards dialogue and engagement without preconditions. It now remains up to the opposition to engage in this renewed offer of consultation.*

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