



Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Republic of Maldives

**Statement by**

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**At the  
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Genève**



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Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

As-salaam Alaikum, and a very good morning to you all,

As I address this Council, I cannot help but recall why we are here. As a bastion of ideals, the Human Rights Council is meant to promote global norms that safeguard the common heritage and futures of our respective peoples. This Council is meant to strengthen systems that guarantee inalienable rights. It is meant to promote governance mechanisms and institutions, created by the people and for the people.

The Constitution of the Republic of Maldives was created by Maldivians, for Maldivians. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of February this year, a conspiracy – financed to the tune of millions of dollars – was set in motion. At the behest of two out of five Justices of our Supreme Court, the Court issued a politically charged order. This order went beyond the powers vested in it by the Constitution. It usurped the powers of other constitutionally mandated institutions, and specifically overrode two Articles of the Constitution. It released individuals in detention and reinstated Members of Parliament for the sole purpose of impeaching our President. They exercised a level of judicial overreach that was unprecedented in our country, while posing an imminent risk to National Security, undermining our Constitution and threatening our very democracy itself.

Mr President,

The rule of law and the supremacy of the Constitution form the foundations of our democracy. With both inherently undermined, with the involvement of outside actors, the National Security Council advised the President of a clear and present threat to our national security. In order to uphold the integrity of the Constitution, drastic action was necessary. The President declared a State of Emergency. This decision was not made lightly.

The Government of Maldives will take every measure to ensure the promotion and protection of the fundamental rights of its citizens. The powers gained under the State of Emergency is only applied in the Capital, and only towards those under investigation for the events of the 1<sup>st</sup> of February. And though it has been a mere decade since the enactment of our Constitution, periodic political crises make clear that further democratic consolidation is needed.



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Having completed a ten-year review of our Constitution this January, the Government has identified long and short-term goals for reform. Changes that can be made without amendments to the Constitution are being drafted for submission to Parliament. Changes that can be implemented by the Executive alone are in the process of being implemented. And the Government continues to work with all stakeholders towards facilitating practical reforms to strengthen our institutions and our democratic framework.

With the next Presidential election only months away, the Government is committed to ensuring that free, fair and credible elections are held. We welcome all international stakeholders to observe our electoral process. We also welcome their continued support and assistance. The Government has been working with the constitutionally created Elections Commission. Together with support from the European Union, through the Elections Observation Mission, recommendations for technical and legislative changes were sought and are being executed so that they can be in effect prior to the elections taking place.

Mr President,

Adhering to our regular elections schedule is imperative to ensure the proper functioning of Government Ministries. Improving the lives of people, ensuring their economic, social, and cultural rights are fulfilled is the highest priority of every successive Government. My Government is determined to ensure that our citizens live happy, independent lives, firm with conviction in their own human dignity.

In the congested Capital of the Maldives, that dignity begins with having a home. The 'Hiya' ('Shelter') project launched this year, and to be completed next year, will provide affordable housing to more than 38 percent of the population, who would otherwise live in overly crowded homes.

The Maldives today, guarantees universal healthcare to all its citizens. Our "Social Protection for All" program goes beyond this, giving special attention to the health and well being of elderly people.



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Mr President,

Today, more students are getting higher education than ever before. Due to opportunities provided by the Government, enrolment in tertiary education has risen from 19% to 32% over the past four years.

The strides we have made, is due to how far we have come as a nation. In education, the Maldives provides 14 years of free schooling. With a 99% national literacy rate, there is complete gender parity in our classrooms.

Mr President,

Once children grow up and enter the workforce, these young adults also enjoy complete gender parity in wages, with equal pay for equal work. They are now guaranteed diverse employment opportunities, with the creation of more than 76 thousand new jobs over the past four years.

We have also paid particular attention to the workplace itself. In order to ensure a happy and healthy working environment, new legislation have been passed, including: the Employment Act, the Sexual Harassment Act, and the Gender Equality Act.

Women and girls have every opportunity for happy, healthy and productive lives. They are the drivers of their own destiny and one of the greatest sources of stability in our nation.

Mr President,

The health and wealth of my nation has grown over the past four years of our Government. From the recently completed 9-year crime study, our success is clear. Over the past four years, we have reduced crime by 35%. We continue to provide special protection for vulnerable groups like women, girls, children and those with disabilities. It is important that our nation comes together and reject influences that would see us divided. The state of my Nation is strong, but in a global community of nations, we are only truly strong when we stand together.



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Mr President,

The challenges we face in my nation, pales in comparison to the challenges we face in the global community. From the threat of terrorism to the global migration crisis, and from racism to xenophobia, we see even developed nations face the brunt of atrocities left unchecked. In turn, these atrocities give birth to new threats and new humanitarian emergencies.

On the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration for Human Rights, we are reminded too that for more than 70 years, the State of Palestine has existed under Israel's oppression. A cycle of fear, hatred, and violence has endured so long in that nation, that generations past and present have been affected. If there was ever a time for the international community to speak with one voice on Palestinian Statehood, that time is now.

Mr President,

We face a collective shame for our inability to alleviate the suffering in Palestine. Sadly, we now face that same shame in Syria. After more than six years of war, there are 11 million displaced, a million of whom are refugees right here in Europe. We have done little, and the voice of this Council is lost in the din of those crying out for some measure of hope.

Mr President,

The obligation to stand up for what is right and just, falls upon the large as well as the small. In leadership of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), the Maldives has led the way – in providing a unique perspective and strong leadership on issues such as trade, sustainable development and climate change. We have spoken ably and loudly. We have changed the course of global discourse and we look forward to continuing to do so in the years ahead.

Thank you.