



President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom
The President's Office
Boduthakurufaanu Magu
Malé 20113
Republic of Maldives

9th August 2017

Dear President Yameen,

We write to express dismay at your Government's plans to resume executions in the Maldives, and your own statement on 6th August that executions will take place in September.

As Maldivian and international observers, we share a number of serious concerns at the plan to break away from Maldives' proud history of maintaining a moratorium, which has lasted for more than half a century.

As you know, the Maldivian Parliament expressly chose not to reinstate the death penalty in 2013.¹ The Maldives has historically used the death penalty only in extremely rare circumstances, with a single execution having taken place in the 1950s.

The Maldives' international friends have also been united in appealing against these executions, which would mark a step backward for the country. The eminent Islamic scholar Tariq Ramadan, of Oxford University, has said that carrying out the execution "would contravene the fundamental principles of Islamic law."² As Professor Ramadan went on to state in his analysis of the cases of those set to be executed: "There is only one way forward and that is to be just and to acknowledge the fact that all the correct conditions should be in effect when taking actions in the name of *Shari'ah*."

There is mounting evidence that those in line for execution – Hussein Humaam Ahmed, Ahmed Murrath and Mohammed Nabeel – have not received fair trials.³ We have seen credible reports that convictions have been secured on the basis of forced confessions and other serious due process violations. Last year, the UN Human Rights Committee requested the Government of Maldives to stay the execution of Humaam, pending the consideration of an appeal filed on the prisoner's behalf. The same requests were issued by the UN body last month in the cases of the two other men, Ahmed Murrath and Mohammed Nabeel. The Maldives has undertaken a binding commitment to cooperate with the Human Rights Committee—should your government go ahead with the executions, it would violate Maldives' obligations under international law, including to protect the three men's right to life.

¹ <http://english.sun.mv/13723>

² <http://maldivesindependent.com/feature-comment/tariq-ramadans-appeal-for-president-yameen-to-stop-imminent-execution-125217>

³ <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=20353&LangID=E>

You have claimed that the introduction of executions after 60 years is necessary to end violent crime. But all the evidence shows that that the death penalty does not have a unique deterrent effect.

The Maldives will thrive only if its values – including protection and promotion of human rights, the rule of law and the fairness and independence of the courts – are upheld. The execution of prisoners who have not received fair trials risks a grave and irreversible miscarriage of justice. The death penalty will do nothing to make the Maldives safer.

We urge you to change course and halt these planned executions.

Amnesty International

Anti-Death Penalty Asia Network

Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)

Maldivian Democracy Network

Reprieve

Transparency Maldives

Uthema