

## Press Release

5 September 2015

### The Stabbing of Lawyer Mahfooz Saeed – Attacks and Harassment of Legal Practitioners in the Maldives

Maldivian Democracy Network urges Maldivian authorities to expedite investigation of near fatal stabbing of former public prosecutor and current member of Former President Mohamed Nasheed's legal team, lawyer Mahfooz Saeed.

Eye-witnesses have said that the stabbing took place on Friday (4 September 2015) at around 5:30pm on a busy street in the capital city, Malé; four men carried out the attack while Mr. Saeed sat on the back seat of a motorcycle. We highlight that there were three CCTV cameras near the scene of crime, and no suspects have been arrested thus far.

The attack on lawyer Saeed can only be construed as an attempted murder carried out to maintain a climate of fear. The stabbing incident comes a week after Mr. Saeed spoke critically of the current government at a Maldivian Democratic Party rally, and just days before members of the Former President Nasheed's international legal team, Amal Clooney & Jared Genser are set to arrive in the Maldives.

Many instances of gang-related political violence, such as the stabbing of Judicial Service Commission member Aishath Velezinee (2011), brutal hacking and murder of MP Dr. Afrasheem Ali (2012), stabbing of MP Alhan Fahmy (2014), life-threatening hacking of journalist Ibrahim 'Asward' Waheed (2013), arson attack on Raajje TV and VTV, and the forced disappearance of Maldives' Independent journalist Ahmed Rilwan in addition to the murders or several youngsters of the country remain unsolved, assuring perpetrators absolute impunity. We call upon the Maldivian State to prosecute members of criminal gangs that use threat of violence or carry out attacks against humanity.

We condemn the recent attacks and harassment of legal practitioners in the Maldives by the judiciary and the police, and call upon the State and the government of the Republic of Maldives to take immediate steps to stop this harassment and to allow legal practitioners to perform their duty in criminal justice peacefully and freely.

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