

LAWASIA FACT-FINDING MISSION TO MALDIVES CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS

Note: Blue text denotes items particular to the LAWASIA Fact-Finding Mission to Maldives.

Government crackdown

- May 2016** Former President Nasheed is granted refugee status in Britain.
- Jun 2016** Former Vice-President Ahmed Adeb is convicted of plotting to assassinate President Abdulla Yameen and jailed for 15 years.
- Supreme Court upholds a 13-year prison sentence passed on former president Mohamed Nasheed in exile in Britain.
- 9 Aug 2016** Maldivian Parliament adopts new law restricting freedom of expression and giving government power to revoke or suspend media licenses.
- Aug 2016** Government issues arrest warrant for Nasheed when he fails to return to Maldives following medical treatment in Britain.
- Oct 2016** Maldives withdraws from the Commonwealth of Nations. Commonwealth had earlier warned that Maldives risked suspension if it failed to show progress in promoting democracy.
- 23 Apr 2017** Blogger and vocal government critic Yameen Rasheed murdered. Additionally, journalist Ahmen Rilwan missing since August 2014 and feared dead.
- 3 Aug 2017** UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions issues statement condemning the “imminent” resumption of executions in the Maldives.
- 22 Aug 2017** Security forces forcibly close the Parliament (Majlis) in what opposition parliamentarians describe as an attempt to block a motion to impeach the Speaker of the Parliament.
- 27 Aug 2017** A petition of concern is signed by 56 lawyers of the Maldives.
- Immediately following the presentation of the petition to the Supreme Court, all 56 signatory lawyers are suspended from practice,¹ accused of interfering with the independence of the judiciary. The group represents approximately one-third of the Maldives’ practising profession.
- 12 Sep 2017** *Lawyers’ petition and the suspension of its signatories are brought to the attention of LAWASIA.*
- 17 Sep 2017** *LAWASIA Executive Committee is briefed on the petition and on issues relevant to the independence of the judiciary, the independence of the legal profession, the rule of law, and related human rights matters in the Maldives.*

¹ 54 lawyers were struck-off in mass suspension, two others had already been suspended at this point.

18 Sep 2017 LAWASIA Council passes a resolution in support of a LAWASIA fact-finding mission to the Maldives.

Sep-Oct 2017 Erosion of rule of law and human rights in Maldives condemned by numerous governments, international organisations and advocacy groups, including International Commission of Jurists (27 Sep 2017), European Parliament (5 Oct 2017 – see Resolution 2017/2870) and UN Special Rapporteur on independence of judges and lawyers (9 Oct 2017).

State of Emergency

1 Feb 2018 Supreme Court of Maldives issues Order No. 2018/SC-SJ/01 for release and retrial of nine key opposition politicians, including former President Mohamed Nasheed, ruling that their trials were “politically motivated and flawed”. The order also restored 12 parliamentarians who had been expelled from the Majlis in July 2017 after defecting from President Yameen’s party (and giving his opponents a majority in parliament).

Maldives Police Service (MPS) states intention to obey and enforce the order.

2 Feb 2018 Government refuses to implement the order. President Yameen fires Commissioner of Police Ahmed Areef.

Broadcast regulator states that TV stations will be shut down if coverage of state of emergency threatens national security.

Prosecutor General raises “legal and constitutional concerns” about validity of the court order.

3 Feb 2018 Parliament cancels first sitting of the year for security reasons.

President Yameen fires the Acting Commissioner of Police and appoints a replacement.

4 Feb 2018 Attorney General challenges the Supreme Court, saying authorities will not obey a potential order to impeach President Yameen.

Opposition lawmakers submit no-confidence motion against Prosecutor General, Attorney General, Home Minister and Defence Minister for refusal to comply with Supreme Court order.

Supreme Court says there is no obstacle to enforcing order and stop police from arresting a senior court official.

5 Feb 2018 President Yameen declares 15-day State of Emergency in Maldives by issue of Presidential Decree (No. 2018/3), suspending 20 constitutional rights, the *Criminal Procedures Act* and parts of the *Judges Act*.

Former president, Maumoon Abdul Gayoom arrested on charges of corruption, bribery and plotting unlawful overthrow of a democratically elected government.

6 Feb 2018 Chief Justice Abdulla Saeed and Justice Ali Hameed arrested at Supreme Court after a seven-hour operation by security forces; Judicial Service Administrator Hassan Saeed Hussein also arrested.

President Yameen issues Presidential Decree (No. 2018/4), suspending Art 48 of Constitution regarding rights on arrests and detentions.

President Yameen further issues Presidential Decree (No. 2018/5), lifting the suspension of Art 145(c) of the Constitution: “The Supreme Court shall be the final authority on the interpretation of the Constitution, the law, or any other matter dealt with by a court of law.”

Supreme Court lifts suspension of seven high-profile opposition lawyers.

Supreme Court issues amendment to order of 1 February, annulling release of political prisoners and asserting supremacy of Supreme Court judges over judicial watchdog.

LAWASIA sends email to United Nations NGO Branch, notifying UN of intended mission and terms of reference.

- 7 Feb 2018** Government of Maldives invites international partners to visit Maldives “to assess the situation in Maldives and witness the safety and security of Male’, for their own citizens as well as to engage with the Government and key stakeholders in the country.”
- Three remaining Supreme Court justices revised previous ruling and nullified order to release nine opposition figures.
- 11 Feb 2018** LAWASIA emails Maldives Immigration to inform of fact-finding mission and inquire as to the relevant visa requirements. No response received.
- 15 Feb 2018** LAWASIA emails Maldives Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) to inform of fact-finding mission and inquire as to the relevant visa requirements. LAWASIA assured that MFA Asia Division would provide guidance in relation to visa requirements.
- 19 Feb 2018** Follow-up emails sent to Ministry of Foreign Affairs and MFA Asia Division. No response received. Follow-up emails sent on ongoing basis (including one to Australian High Commission in Sri Lanka), with final pre-mission inquiry sent 23 Feb 2018.
- 20 Feb 2018** State of emergency extended for additional 30 days. Prosecutor General deemed the action “unconstitutional” as the vote to extend the state of emergency was forced through parliament without quorum.
- 23 Feb 2018** LAWASIA duly informs Maldives Immigration, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and, specifically, MFA Asia Division that “given the impending arrival dates of the delegation and the indeterminateness of response to our requests, we are writing to inform the department that the arriving delegation will be proceeding with its plans on the understanding that the thirty day visa issued on arrival is applicable for the purpose of the visit, namely to attend several meetings to ascertain the situation in Male’, unless we receive direct advice to the contrary.” No response or contrary indication received.

Intended dates of LAWASIA fact-finding mission: 23 Feb – 1 Mar 2018.

- 25 Feb 2018** Four members of LAWASIA fact-finding mission are denied entry to Maldives upon arrival at Velana International Airport. The group is held overnight at closed detention facility under guard and surveillance, and subsequently deported to Sri Lanka.

LAWASIA forced to cancel previously arranged meetings in Male’ and conclude this stage of fact-finding mission early.

Actual dates of fact-finding mission: 23 – 26 Feb 2018.

- 27 Feb 2018** [LAWASIA issues media release: “LAWASIA responds to reports concerning fact-finding team’s denied entry to the Maldives”.](#)
- 20 Mar 2018** Charges brought against Chief Justice Saeed and Justice Hameed under *Anti-Terrorism Act*, in addition to charges of bribery and obstructing justice.
- 21 Mar 2018** Former President Gayoom charged with terrorism and obstructing justice.
- 22 Mar 2018** State of emergency lifted.
- 9 Apr 2018** [LAWASIA emails Maldives Immigration and Ministry of Foreign Affairs seeking advice regarding visa requirements with view to conducting second visit to Male’.](#) No response received.
- 23 Apr 2018** [LAWASIA sends follow-up emails to Maldives Immigration and Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding visa advice.](#)
- 8 May 2018** Chief Justice Abdulla Saeed sentenced to five months’ imprisonment on obstruction charges.
- 10 May 2018** Chief Justice Abdulla Saeed and Justice Ali Hameed found guilty of influencing official conduct and sentenced to one year, seven months and six days in prison. Trials were conducted behind closed doors, off-limits to media and public.
- 20 May 2018** Election Commission announces that anyone convicted of a criminal offence cannot legally contest as a political party's candidate in a presidential primary election, effectively barring the four main opposition leaders from contesting the 2018 elections.
- 21 May 2018** Election Commission threatens to dissolve the opposition Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) if its sole candidate, former President Mohamed Nasheed, contests the party’s primaries.
- 30 May 2018** [LAWASIA sends second follow-up emails to Maldives Immigration and Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding visa advice.](#) No response received.
- 4 Jun 2018** [LAWASIA writes to Honorary Consul General to Maldives in Melbourne, Australia, seeking advice regarding visa requirements and communication with Maldives authorities.](#) No response received.
- 8 Jun 2018** Election Commission announces date of presidential elections as **23 September 2018**.
- 13 Jun 2018** Former president Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, Chief Justice Abdulla Saeed and Supreme Court Justice Ali Hameed convicted of obstruction of justice and sentenced to 19 months in prison.
- 12 Jul 2018** [LAWASIA issues third follow-up emails regarding visa advice to Maldives Immigration and Ministry of Foreign Affairs.](#)
- [LAWASIA writes to 16 contacts in Maldives and Sri Lanka requesting update on situation in Maldives since its visit in February.](#)

Sources : [BBC](#) chronology of key events
[Al Jazeera](#) timeline of corruption
[Maldives Independent](#) state of emergency timeline
[CIVICUS](#) ‘Repression in Paradise’ policy brief (April 2018)