



Condemning government's use of security services to intimidate the public ahead of May Day protest

April 7, Malé, The Maldives The national movement against tyranny condemns the Yameen government's politically motivated use of the security services to intimidate the public in the lead up to a nationwide peaceful protest scheduled for May 1.

In a press conference on Tuesday, 28 April evening, the Police and military gave a joint press conference alleging that the May Day protest calling for an end to brutality will not be peaceful. It is concerning that the security services are making such public statements prior to the event, and without offering any justification. The Police and military warned of a crackdown in the event protest becomes unlawful, citing the Anti Social Behaviour Act. Such statements are in direct contravention of the constitutional provision of freedom of speech (Article. 27), freedom of association (Article. 30) and freedom of assembly (Article.32).

Police and military also warned the media to keep in mind the "national interest" while reporting news of the planned protest.

This comes against a backdrop of continued intimidation of leaders of the opposition movement, media, civil servants and political activists. Police have summoned opposition leaders for questioning, state owned companies and Government officials are warning that there will be disciplinary measures taken against any employees who participate in the May Day protest and authorities continue to ignore reported threats against journalists. This is a direct attack on the right to association. There have also been numerous reports of the security services carrying out stop searches on marine vessels transporting people to Male' for Friday's demonstration.

The Government continues to order the Police to stray outside of regulated Police powers, unlawfully cracking down on the constitutionally stipulated right to assembly through several arbitrary changes that has been used to restrict peaceful demonstrations.

The national movement calls upon the Government and security forces to implement the constitutional obligation of the State to protect and promote the rights and freedoms prescribed in the Constitution (Article. 18). The national movement also call upon the Government to refrain from using the security forces to make politically motivated statements and ask all Maldivians to join the anti brutality protests in Male' on Friday, May 1st.

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