

Maldives

Decision adopted by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians at its 161st session (Geneva, 20–30 January 2020)



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MDV-60 - Abdulla Riyaz

Alleged human rights violations:

- ✓ Arbitrary arrest and detention
- ✓ Lack of due process in proceedings against parliamentarians
- ✓ Violation of freedom of opinion and expression

A. Summary of the case

Although the original case concerned scores of members of the People's Majlis, who had faced wide-ranging human rights violations since 2012, the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians concluded, in light of the actions taken by the authorities in 2018 and 2019, that the situation of all of these parliamentarians, with the exception of Mr. Abdulla Riyaz, had been resolved and/or that no further action was required on its part.

Mr. Riyaz was arrested at a protest on 2 March 2018 and taken thereafter to a remand centre inside Maafushi Prison, the facility for sentenced criminals. The family had reported problems in his obtaining full representation by a lawyer and in receiving family visits, as well as adequate medical treatment. On 18 March 2018, the criminal court decided to extend his remand until the end of his trial. On 20 March 2018, Mr. Riyaz was charged with terrorism in addition to

CASE MDV-60

Maldives: Parliament affiliated to the IPU

Victim(s): A male opposition member of parliament

Qualified complainant(s): Section I.1(a) of the [Committee Procedure](#) (Annex I)

Submission of complaint(s): February 2012

Recent IPU decision(s): [April 2019](#)

IPU mission(s): [March 2018](#), [October 2016](#), November 2013, [November 2012](#)

Recent Committee hearing(s): Hearing with the Maldives delegation at the 140th IPU Assembly (April 2019)

Recent follow-up:

- Communication from the authorities: Letter from the Secretary General of the People's Majlis (April 2019)
- Communication from the complainant: January 2020
- Communication addressed to the authorities: Letter addressed to the Speaker of the People's Majlis (June 2019)
- Communication addressed to the complainant: November 2019

earlier charges that he had unlawfully entered parliament in 2016 and had refused to disclose his mobile phone PIN number to the police. Mr. Riyaz was released on 24 September 2018. As per the latest information from the complainant, Mr. Riyaz is no longer subject to the aforesaid charges.

B. Decision

The Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians:

1. *Is pleased* that Mr. Abdulla Riyaz is no longer subject to legal proceedings;
2. *Decides* therefore to close his case in accordance with section 25 of Annex I of its Procedure for the examination and treatment of complaints, while regretting that he had to spend several months in detention, often in reportedly poor conditions, and without information being made available on the facts in support of the charges against him;
3. *Recalls* that the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians has undertaken several missions to the Maldives since 2012, which have identified a number of factors that have accompanied and enabled the violations of the human rights of members of parliament that arose in the original overall case, including a “winner-takes-all” political mentality, lack of a culture of political dialogue, reports of widespread corruption, systematic floor crossing in parliament, the focus on personality rather than programme-based political parties, lack of democratic oversight of the security sector and the absence of a fully independent judiciary and independent oversight institutions; and *sincerely hopes* that the new parliament and the Government will use their powers to address these factors and hence reinforce the foundations of democracy in the Maldives;
4. *Reaffirms* that the IPU stands ready to lend its expertise to the Maldivian authorities to facilitate constructive dialogue in parliament and between parliament and the other state branches, and to promote a better understanding of the protection of the rights of parliamentarians;
5. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the authorities and the complainant.